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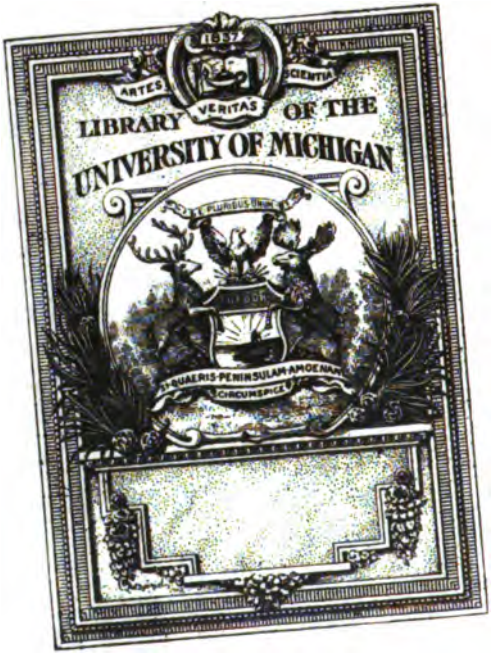

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THE WORKS OF THE RT. REV.

CHARLES C. GRAFTON, S.T.D., LL.D.

SECOND BISHOP OF FOND DU LAC

EDITED BY

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IN EIGHT VOLUMES

VOLUME V

MCMXIV

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TO OUR ADORABLE LORD

AND ONLY SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST

THIS RECORD OF THE LIFE, LOVE AND WORKS

OF HIS DEVOTED SAINT

IS REVERENTLY INSCRIBED

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U of M *The Rev. Father Grafton*

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VOCATION

OR

THE CALL OF THE DIVINE MASTER TO A SISTER'S LIFE

AND OTHER WRITINGS ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY

THE RIGHT REVEREND

CHARLES C. GRAFTON, S.T.D., LL.D.

BISHOP OF FOND DU LAC

NEW EDITION

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VOCATION

OR

THE CALL OF THE DIVINE MASTER TO A SISTER'S LIFE

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TO

THE SUPERIORS AND SISTERS

OF ALL THE

SISTERHOODS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND AMERICA,

IN WHICH THE WRITER HAS BEEN PRIVILEGED TO LABOUR,

AND TO THE

SISTERHOOD OF THE HOLY NATIVITY

WHICH GOD IN HIS PROVIDENCE HAS ALLOWED HIM TO FOUND,

WITH THE PRAYER

THAT THE LORD WHO CALLED THEM ALL

WILL GUIDE, PROSPER, AND BLESS THEM AS COMMUNITIES AND

PERFECT THEIR MYSTICAL UNION

WITH HIMSELF

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VOCATION

CHAPTER I

INQUIRIES ABOUT SISTERHOODS

The Work of Sisterhoods now recognized by the Church — Many Questions asked concerning their Interior Government and Life — Classes specially interested, Clergy, Parents, and Aspirants — The Information and Help the Book is intended to give.

SISTERHOODS have now for a long time been established in our Church. The first efforts were made more than forty years ago.[1] The beginnings were marked by mistakes incident to all enterprises. Naturally, the mistakes called forth criticism, and the criticism did good. Growing slowly in consequence of opposition, the growth was the more healthful. As errors became rectified, prejudices passed away — commendation took the place of censure. First, the work done won its deserved applause; then, the life of consecrated service, which was the soul of the work, obtained commendatory recognition. The Church gradually approved of these Christian organizations, and a number of her bishops became formally connected with them. By all liberal-minded churchmen these facts will be welcomed as a great token of the present work of the Holy Ghost in our communion, for which they can but thank God and take courage.

[1] This was written about 1885.

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Now that by God's fostering care Sisterhoods have come to be at home among us, so many questions are asked concerning them that it is believed a simple explanation of some of the fundamental matters respecting their organization and life will not be unacceptable to various classes of workers. Clergy are often desirous of knowing more about the various societies in order to reply intelligently to the inquiries of parishioners. Parents and others having children or friends contemplating entering Sisterhoods naturally desire all the information they can obtain about the life. There is also another interested class. "Am I called to this life? Is it my vocation? Is it my duty to seek to enter it now? Am I fitted for the work of this or that Sisterhood? What ought I to do in the matter? What steps must I take to enter a Sisterhood, if that is my duty?" These are questions which agitate not a few earnest souls, and sometimes needlessly distress them. Sometimes the idea is but a temporary fancy, the result of some disappointment or momentary enthusiasm. Sometimes the idea which flits before the imagination is very different from the reality, and what the person desires is not the Religious Life at all. Sometimes the vision of that life in all its stern reality but persuasive loveliness is clearly seen, but the soul is greatly perplexed by a seeming conflict of duties, and knows not how to decide between them. Sometimes the desire to devote itself unreservedly to the Master's service has sprung up in the soul, like the good seed, one scarcely knows

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how, and aid is desired to know if the call be indeed from God, and if so, how it is to be obeyed.

The soul's maturing judgment becomes gradually conscious of its own needs, or it hears a voice breaking in suddenly on its life which seems to say: "The Master hath come, and calleth for thee" — but its own unworthiness makes it shrink back, or its lack of courage makes it afraid. How often are heart and conscience, will and judgment, the theatre of a struggle as real and intense as ever Roman amphitheatre saw. For whenever there is a true call from God, there is conflict without and within. Only those who have felt it can fully declare it. The opposition of friends is not needed to make the conflict painful. The voice of God rouses into activity all the powers of evil. When the child would come to Christ, "the devil threw him down and tare him."[1] We cannot here enter into the matter of duty to one's vocation, yet we would ask, in passing, the indulgence and sympathy of parents and friends for any son or daughter thus tried.

To help all interested in the subject, and especially these three classes, is the purpose of this little book. It is important that aspirants should know, as far as they possibly can without living it, what the life really is, that they be not afterward disappointed. It is for the best interests of the life, that those who are not fitted for it should be kept out of it. It is doing God's work to help those truly called by Him to know His will and how to do it.

[1] S. Luke ix. 42.

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It is important for parents, if their children wish to enter Sisterhoods, to understand what the life is, that they may discuss the matter intelligently. An unwise opposition based on theological prejudices, or misrepresentations, or premises which the daughter's mind rejects, only makes her desire more intense. She knows the Sisterhood life is recognized in our Church, believes it to be scriptural, and may feel called to this service. A Christian parent will recognize the right of a Heavenly and Supreme Father to call his child into such fuller service as He sees fit. He may be able to recognize such a call as an honour done himself, but wishes to secure his child's true welfare, and so naturally seeks some reasonable assurance that his child is fitted for the life and will be happy in it. He wants to know under what stipulations his daughter enters a Sisterhood; whether she may at any time leave it if she finds it unsuited to her; what are the rules respecting her intercourse with her family; what rights she may have over her property, present or prospective; what work she will be obliged to do, and whether it is such as her health will permit; what her surroundings will be, and whether she will find that sympathy and affection in her society, as well as abiding interest in her work, which are the guarantees of a happy as well as a useful life.

And it is hoped there may be something in these suggestions to help the clergy to a better understanding of the subject. The utility of Deaconesses and Sisterhoods in our Church has been generally

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recognized. But beyond the work done by the Sisters, the clergy in general know but little. When consulted by a parishioner as to the duty of such self-consecration, they have no very settled convictions as to what constitutes a vocation or by what tests it may be known. Sometimes with the utmost conscientiousness they advise persons to enter Communities whom they should have known were unsuited to a Community life. Sometimes they wisely hesitate to advise from superficial knowledge of the work and life of the different Sisterhoods. Of course, there are some clergy who feel it their duty on principle to discourage any who should apply for advice, believing that sisterhoods, monks, and monasteries belong to mediævalism, or had a pagan origin, or are founded on a false notion of asceticism, or that they are anti-scriptural, or that they lead to Rome, or that, however they may have been of benefit to the Church of the past, they are now useless.

It is a trite enough saying that there is no prejudice like theological prejudice; but, after all, theological prejudice often has a good motive, and it has a very respectable pedigree, and ought, at least by the clergy, to be treated in a kindly spirit. If the principles of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood life have not Christ for their founder, but were adopted into Christianity from paganism; if they are the embodiment of a false asceticism, or are a practical denial of our justification by faith through the merits of Christ's one Atoning Sacrifice; if they are neces-

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sarily part of the evils which the Reformers protested against and the Reformation abolished, they ought to have no encouragement whatever in the Church, and surely would not have it. We should not find an Archbishop of Canterbury the visitor of one of the largest Sisterhoods in England, and the Bishop of Oxford of another, and Bishops in Scotland and in the United States founding and fostering them. Most of the clergy feel this, and yet they want to know something more about the details of Sisterhood life in order intelligently to reply to those who consult them, and to send them to those Sisterhoods for which they are best fitted, and where the Church will receive the most benefit from their services.

Perhaps the best and fairest way to help clergy, parents, and aspirants will be, before giving any arguments in favour of the Religious Life or trying to show its scriptural character or present usefulness, to recount some of the main facts to be known about Sisterhoods, their mode of government and internal life, and let persons judge for themselves.

It may, perhaps, seem like plunging in *medias res* if we first describe how one enters a Sisterhood and becomes a Sister, but it will answer some questions which are always the first to arise either in the minds of the parents, or of the aspirants for admission.

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CHAPTER II

HOW TO ENTER A SISTERHOOD

Not an easy thing to become a Sister — How Admission should be Sought — Some Signs of Unfitness — Need of a Community Spirit — The Preliminary visit to the Sisterhood — Postulancy, its Duration and Work — Election of the Novice, when and how — The Training in the Novitiate — The various kinds of Work done by the different Sisterhoods — In those given to Spiritual Work much Study of the Bible Recommended — Wisdom of a long Novitiate — Some Considerations moving a Parent to allow his Daughter to make Trial of her Vocation — Questions arising concerning the Use and Disposal of the Property of the Novice.

IT is not such an easy thing to become a Sister as the world imagines. The doors of a well-regulated Sisterhood swing open with comparative ease to those within seeking egress, but are opened slowly, and only after long and patient waiting, to those without. The reason is obvious. The Sisters form a family. They would like to have it increase by admissions, but it is of greater importance whom they admit. They know that nothing more disturbs its harmony than to have one in the family whose heart is not in the Life. Such a one is not only a misery to herself, but a source of misery to all the others. The Sisters also feel their life to be a united tribute of holy consecrated service, and a bad Religious mars the offering to God. Therefore, most Sisterhoods are strict respecting admissions. The door opens slowly from without. A good Sisterhood, it has been said, will reject about one-third of its applicants.

For one seeking admission the usual course would be to write to the Mother Superior or Chaplain,

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making known her wishes and giving some reference, if she be unknown to the Sisterhood. She should write frankly about herself, and her circumstances, stating how long she has had the desire for the Sister's life, and how it had come into her mind. She will be counselled to examine herself still further about the matter and instructed how to do this. She will be informed very frankly of the difficulties of the Life, in order that any fanciful illusions about it may be dissipated. If she has not laid the matter before her parents she will be told to do so. Ordinarily, on first writing she can but say she desires to give herself wholly to God's service, and has prayerfully considered the matter. She may have no real fitness for the Life. She may be unsuited by reason of her feeble health or inherited tendency to an unsound mind, or by an hysterical or melancholy temperament, or by some unconquered evil habits, or be unfit by reason of her want of education. She may be a person of refinement and devotion, or possessed of great practical abilities, and nevertheless be unsuited for a Community life. For it is not to be taken for granted that every, even exceptionally, devout person, however free from duties, is fitted to be a sister. She may, from age or fixed devotional habits and opinions, or because she is of excitable or over-sensitive temperament, be better suited to serve God or grow in holiness alone or at home than in a Religious House. Great strength of character and great intellectual gifts when accompanied with much self-esteem

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make a dangerous combination which every Sisterhood would do well to avoid.

The Community spirit is part of the gift of a true vocation. In its primary Christian elements it is the same spirit that gives brightness and happiness to home life. It is seen in the power of adapting one's self to others; the bearing with the infirmities of age and the exactions of youth; the art of not giving or taking offence; the cheerful bearing with little discomforts; the happy faculty of making things go smoothly in the household. It is because the cheerfulness which comes from unselfishness, and is often gay and social and society-loving, has in it the grand elements of a Community spirit that, to the surprise of the world, more of this class become good Religious than those whose temperament is naturally more devotional but whose devotion is full of self and self-love. Superiors are keenly alive to this and similar deficiencies which mark unfitness for the Life. The applicant is not usually aware of them herself. They do not appear in her letter of application. They are perhaps unknown to her parents and friends, so that often the wisest thing a parent can do is to give, to a daughter who desires to join one, the permission to visit a Sisterhood. This will often settle the matter by dissipating the previously-formed erroneous ideas concerning the Life and its work. If, however, after her experience as a visitor she is desirous of remaining as a postulant and obtains permission, the Superior of the Sisterhood may allow her to do so.

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There is much difference in the various Sisterhoods as to the length of time one may remain in this latter position. In the Roman Church it is often but a month or two, and in some Anglican Sisterhoods it is a brief period. The opinion of the writer is that great care should be taken in this matter, and that, as it is better to err on the side of caution, the time should be six months or more. During this time, parents will be glad to know, the probationer assumes no religious habit. She is, of course, free to write to them, and free at any time to return home. Her duties are simple. Her time is occupied partly in charitable work, partly in devotion and study. She is now also fully instructed in all matters relating to the rule of life and the duties of a Sister of the Community. If at the end of her postulancy she still desires the Life, she is, with the consent of the Superior and Chaplain, put up for election as a Novice. By this election the sisters have an opportunity of passing their judgment on the fitness of the person. In some Communities the Sisters have no vote or voice in the matter, the power of reception being with the Superior, who acts from personal knowledge and the report she receives from the Mistress of the Novices. Sometimes, by its constitution, on account of the great size of the Community, the number of electors is limited to a council, or to a class called the Senior Professed. But in most Sisterhoods in our Church all the Sisters, who have had an opportunity of knowing the postulant, express their opinion in the solemn

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way of an election made after prayer; the votes being placed in sealed envelopes and laid on the altar. Such an election is a great protection against any error of judgment by any of the parties. It protects the Sisterhood, and, if she be duly elected, it is a guarantee to the parent of his child's fitness, and to the aspirant of her calling to the Life.

The novitiate lasts about two years. The training in each Sisterhood must, of course, correspond with its own object, spirit, and work. All are good and all of God; but there are various flowers in His garden, and many ways in which souls may glorify Him. Religious Communities are divided into two classes, those distinctly of a contemplative and those of an active character. The Sisterhoods in our Church, with some few exceptions, are but little enclosed, and are engaged in active work; and yet a further division may be noticed since, by common consent, good works done for our Lord have been classified as corporal and spiritual works of mercy. These characteristics must, therefore, somewhat influence, in our Sisterhoods, not only the degree of enclosure enjoined by the rule, but the spirit of the Life, and also the training of the Novice.

When the plan of the Sisterhood embraces such works as secular schools, the care of the sick, and the like, then this external work must have a prominent place in the education of its members. Perhaps the Novice must go into the public hospitals or into those under the care of the Sisters to be trained as a nurse; or, if need be, prepare herself by a course

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of study to be a teacher. To do her work well, she must be a practical person well educated in her specialty. She will also receive instruction from the Mistress of Novices in the spiritual life and its outward discipline, in the practice of daily self-examination, and in the making of meditation, or the first degree of mental prayer. Ordinarily, one day in the month is given her for a day of retirement and prayer; and yearly, a retreat of several days is given to all the sisters by a special conductor. But in the very active orders the time prescribed for devotion by the Professed Sisters must be controlled by the work to be done, and the devotional habits which might be suited to a Carmelite are out of place in the life of a Sister of Charity. Yet she is to be as truly a religious as those who by their rule are more enclosed. She is to be filled with the spirit of devotion and to carry it out into her work. Her cell is found in the hospital, the school, by the bedside of the dying. She seeks Christ in His poor, she ministers to Him in supplying their needs. Work is therefore, for her, prayer, and sometimes must take its place.

Each variety of the Life is dear to God, and all is done for His glory. The active and the contemplative spirit are alike the creation of His grace. St. Peter and St. John run together to the Holy Sepulchre, and work together the first miracle at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. But these elements combine in various degrees in our Sisterhoods, and the predominance of either gives the Commu-

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nity its special character. The lines of work and rules of life are, so to speak, set in different keys. This might charitably be remembered by those who are quick to criticise.

When a Sisterhood leans rather to spiritual than to corporal charity, aiming to aid the parochial clergy, not only as dispensers of the Church's alms, but in their labour for souls, a different course of instruction is necessary for the Novice. She must be taught, not only, as above, the things pertaining to her own spiritual life, but also Christian doctrine, and be trained especially to study Holy Scripture. The great lack of an interest in God's word among so many Christians makes this a special duty of our times, and one to which these Sisters should energetically devote themselves. They ought to know, and know well, their Bible. They must therefore give time to its study, not only for their own growth in holiness, but in order the better to teach the Faith to others. The multiplicity of devotional books in our day must not draw us aside from that Word in which God reveals His mind, and wherein the highest examples of saintliness are to be found. As in mediæval times the illumination of the Gospel manuscripts expressed the value of the Scriptures as the jewels of the Church, we may express our esteem for them by diligent and prayerful study; and therefore, in a Sisterhood devoted to mission work, such study must form a large portion of the training of the Novice.

So much for the novitiate. No Christian parent,

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having as he does the best interests of his children at heart, but should be glad that a daughter of his may receive such a training, even if she does not eventually become a full Sister — a training that can but make her love her Bible and her Saviour more.

As to the length of the period of probation, while the Novice may at times be impatient at the delay, parents are never found either to question the wisdom of a long novitiate or to be unwilling to recognize its benefit. Sometimes, indeed, the clergy do so. The reason of this is that clergy want assistance in their parishes, or have hospitals or schools, which they desire to place under the care of Sisters, and urgently petition the Communities for help. They do not understand that time is required to make a Sister. Sometimes persons write to ask for the rules of a Sisterhood, thinking that it is not a difficult task to form one, and all that is needed is the receipt. It is certainly easy to write some rules, to draft a constitution, to adopt a dress, but, according to the old saying, "It is not the cowl that makes the monk."

A Sister is not a mere church officer or a church worker giving her life to charitable labour. There is a large number of excellent Christian workers in our parishes who do much good and acceptable service for Christ's sake. But the chief value of a Sister's work comes from her trained Christian character. It is not the good deeds accomplished, but her hidden life with God, which should shine

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through all she does. And for the formation of such a character not only time is needed, and prayer, and Sacraments, and spiritual books, and a parish priest's aid, but the atmosphere of a Religious House, the intercourse with those striving like herself after holiness, the daily discipline of the Life and Rule, and especially the training under one able to fill rightly the office technically known as the Mistress of Novices. A person fitted for this position by her own life and Christian experience, by her balance of character, her tender firmness and her loving sympathy, by her power of spiritual discernment, and her needed intellectual gifts, is indeed rare. Yet it is only under such influences that the sister's character can be formed. If clergy are desirous for the help of Sisters in their parishes, their best course will be to seek out postulants and send them to some Sisterhood to be trained, and patiently wait until the Sisterhoods are able to meet the needs of the Church. It is the far wiser as it is the more self-sacrificing course; for while a well-trained and well-instructed Sister is a help to the Church, a poorly prepared one is not. The world and the Church sharply criticise Sisters, and it is but right they should do so; but if they expect much, time and great care must be given to the development of their spiritual character.

This is best for the Church, and it is also for the Sister herself. On coming to a Community she but little knows herself. It is one of the surprises of the novitiate that faults which were unperceived in

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the home life appear. They were hidden either by the loving idolatry of home affection, which so blinds us to ourselves, or were elements of weakness in her character, which the Religious Life brings out to view, as the warmth of the fire brings out the words written on the old parchment in invisible ink. The novice is always thankful in the end that her novitiate is not shortened, and that she has learned to be still and hidden and wait on God. By the long delay she not only obtains a better knowledge of the life and of herself, but, best of all, a new and blessed experience of the love and restoring power of her Lord. If rightly used, her novitiate will enable her to conform to His dear will as to her future, whatever it may be. She will have learned to rest on it, as the birds in mid-ocean, when weary in their flight, learn to repose on the rising and falling wave. She learns to abandon her will to His, and let Him choose for her, content to serve Him as He, by His will, manifested in His external providence as well as by His inward call, may determine. And so, when the two or more years of the novitiate are ended, she may solemnly express her deliberate choice, and the Sisters again give their judgment on the case by an election, requiring for her reception that a two-thirds vote of the Community be in favour of her admission.[1]

[1] In the Constitution of the Community — the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity — founded by him, Bishop Grafton established an intermediate rank, between the Novices and the Professed Sisters. At the expiration of her Novitiate, the Sister passes (if elected thereto)

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The very careful manner in which a vocation is thus tested ought to be considered by a parent whenever a daughter feels that she is called by God's Holy Spirit to enter the Religious Life. He must feel agitated by various emotions, and is liable to be influenced by both good and bad motives. Sisterhoods may have received the Church's approval, may have had his own, yet the matter looks very different when any one so near as a daughter desires thus to devote herself to God. Wrong notions of the life, of its rules, or of the character of those who enter, may influence him. He may find his hopes and plans disarranged by her choice. He may feel his self-love wounded that she should desire something so out of sympathy with his own line of life. But he may look upon the matter from a higher point of view. It requires, indeed, much strength of mind to throw off inherited prejudices, and considerable greatness of character to put aside one's own interests and consider solely another's welfare; but he may do this. Rightly he may feel it a sacrifice on his part, which, however, for the best good of his child he is willing to make; yet he very properly wishes to have some reasonable security that the call of the child is really from God, and that the life will be the best and happiest one for her. This the long novitiate and double election of the sisters will provide.

into this rank of Junior Professed, taking vows for two years only. At the end of that time she is allowed, after another election, to take life-vows. The time between the admission of a Postulant and her Profession with life-vows is thus about five years. This provision has been found to have many advantages.

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Now, he cannot assume to measure the desires of her nature by those of his own. What is unseen by him may be a clear vision in the mirror of her unsullied mind. What does not awaken in him any response toward God may be the breath of the Spirit moving upon heartstrings drawn by prayer to a more sensitive tension and vibration to things divine. What seems a life most unattractive to him may be to her filled with the beauty of the promised land. What is especially distasteful and repellant to him may be to her the life and food of the soul. Whatever we do, let us not measure others' needs by our own experience, or by our own limited desires and aspirations. The truth shines out in the face of our common humanity, that each soul is a separate creation of God. Thanking God that He has thus made us different, and for different places in His kingdom, let us not by our narrow selfishness hinder His work. If God has crowned our life with success, enriched it with temporal, or, better, with spiritual gifts, let us not think He can make others happy only in the same way. All trials call for greatness of soul, and so must this of a daughter's choice of life. But with whatever nobleness of soul or generosity of affection a parent may regard the matter, it is right and his duty to ask: Is this notion a passing one? Is she not acting in ignorance of herself and of the Religious Life? Does she as yet really know herself and the needs of her own soul? Has she the health for this kind of life, or the life in this or that especial Sisterhood? Now, the fact of there being a very long

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probation is a most important one, and one which should have great weight. In what other way of life is such an opportunity offered of previous trial? How many make mistakes in their plans for education, or in their choice of business or profession. How much misery is caused by the injudicious selection of a partner. How many married unions are sources of painful discord and strife. What a number of lives are thus blighted and sorrow-stricken, and for how many the beauty and hope and grace of life is dead!

Very different is the mode of entering on the Religious Life in any wisely established Sisterhood. There must be, as we have seen, a long preliminary trial made of the Life before one is accepted. It must be, by the applicant, fully known and tested before she is allowed to commit herself. It will therefore be entered upon "advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." And very different, consequently, is the result. No legal restraints lie in the way of any leaving when they please, and yet few ever do so. The most careful and impartial inquiry made in Religious Houses reveals the shining fact that there is no body of women so universally contented and constantly happy in their lot as Sisters.

The question whether a person has a vocation, and how it may be recognized, will be discussed farther on; but if, after patient waiting and prayer, the aspirant feels convinced of it, any parent might be able to say, in view of the long trial allowed: Though I do not sympathize with your wishes, yet

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a trial can do no harm, and I will not stand in the way of your making the experiment.

Before going farther into the details of the Life, it may be well to speak here of a matter connected with the entrance of the postulant which always presents itself to her and to her parents or friends. What dowry, or pecuniary aid, must the Sister bring to the Community?

The rules about this differ in the various Sisterhoods, and it would be well that parents should obtain full and definite information from the Superior about all questions relating to their child's present and prospective possessions, before her entrance.

Sisterhoods are supported in different ways. Some make appeals to the Church public. Some gain considerable income from secular schools or their own private hospitals. Some send out members to beg for the Community. Some are aided by the private contributions of their Associates, who are living in the world. Of course there must be some provision made for the maintenance of the society, and it is but reasonable that each member should contribute, if able to do so, to its support. In most Sisterhoods, however, no one need be deterred from applying because she is without worldly means. Many Sisterhoods ask no more than that the applicant bring an earnest desire to devote herself to Christ, and a disposition which fits her for Community life. If, however, she can make some offering for the common support, she should

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do so. The danger of seeking wealth should be strictly shunned. The words of the Apostle should be ours: "We seek not yours, but you." In order to maintain the freedom and equality which belong to the members of a family, and also that hiddenness which is so beautiful a characteristic of the Christian life, the amount given by each member is made known to the Superior only.

But the further questions may arise in the parent's mind: If his daughter have some property, is she obliged to give this up to the Sisterhood should she eventually join it? What control would she have over it? What disposition might she make of any of which she might become possessed subsequently to her profession? These and all like questions should be asked of the Superior, or of those in charge of the Sisterhood. It is not in the power of the writer to answer them fully. There has, we know from history, been a danger on the part of Religious Houses in seeking to acquire property beyond what is needed for their daily support and the maintenance of their work. One great cause of the Reformation lay in the worldliness and greed of the Church at that time. Let us hope the lesson has been successfully learned, at least for ourselves, and that religious societies will severely keep themselves from all liability of future censure. It is believed that the rules of all our Sisterhoods are framed with the desire to avoid worldliness, and with careful regard to the interests of all.

There are three things to be considered on the

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part of the Sisterhoods — its own maintenance and work, the equality of the members of its family, the preservation of an unworldly spirit that does not grasp at wealth. On the part of the aspirant, or her parents, it is necessary that they should see that, at least during the time of probation, the Novice shall not part with her property; and that, when Professed, she shall be free to dispose of her capital by will, or otherwise, according to the claims of duty.

These general remarks, it is believed, fairly represent the spirit of our Sisterhoods. The wisdom of them must be admitted. The rules concerning property in each Community are formed to prevent undue influence and worldly greed; and so guarded, the stability of the Sisterhood is secure. God, who calls, will provide for His own. He will not leave or forsake those who have forsaken all for Him. He has made them a special promise, and He will not fail of His word.

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CHAPTER III

THE WORK OF SISTERHOODS

The Origin of the Charitable Organizations of the Church — When the first Hospitals, Asylums, etc., were begun — Character of Work undertaken by our Sisterhoods — Suggestion as to the Wisdom of each Sisterhood having its Special line of Work — Choice of a Sisterhood — Objection: Could not the Work be done by Those living in their own Homes? — The Church's Answer — The Advantage of Organization — Need in some Cases of identifying One's self with Those we would Help — Difference between Philanthropy and Christian Charity — The Sister an Instrument through which Christ most successfully Works — The Life of a Sister most Effective because a Public Witness to the Life of Christ.

FROM the earliest times the Church has been engaged in works of practical benevolence. Her heart from the first was stirred by the wants of her poor and suffering ones. In the days of her pentecostal fervour each Christian was so dear to the other that they had all things in common. When this became impracticable, at least there must be due provision that none should want. Immediately the needed offerings were made, and the means for their judicious distribution were established. Out of this necessity of supplying bodily needs there was born the spiritual order of Deacons. The gnawings of coming hunger were felt by the Church, and moved her prophets to declare the future famine, that for it provision might be made. The barriers between Jew and Gentile were broken down, and all seemed so near to Christ that from remotest regions alms were sent to supply the wants of sufferers at Jerusalem. And it was not for her

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children alone, the members of her own household, the Church so maternally cared. When the era of persecution passed away, and she, obtaining freedom, was able to go forth openly on her mission to the world, then for all she sought to provide. She came to men her lips full of blessings and her hands full of gifts. For it must never be forgotten that ere she came, however Roman amphitheatres might ring with plaudits at such sentiments as those of the Latin Dramatic Poet:

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto,"

it was sentiment only. One might walk from one end of Rome to another without finding a public hospital. But just so soon as the Church was free to do so, she began publicly her ministrations of mercy. From a sermon of Canon Liddon,[1] who cites for his authority Möhler's "Kirchengeschichte," we condense the following interesting account:

"The first hospitals and houses of refuge of which we have any notice date from the second half of the fourth century. Sebaste, in Pontus, about the year 355, has the honour of furnishing the earliest hospitals on record. But such like institutions could but quickly become common; they spread rapidly over Christendom. There were boarding-houses for travellers, hospitals for the sick, almshouses for the old and for the poor, orphan asylums, and foundling hospitals — all creations of the Church, and conducted on strictly religious principles.

[1] "A Sister's Work." Preached at All Saints Church, London.

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Pre-eminent among a multitude of these works of charity was the great hospital founded at Cæsarea, by S. Basil, about A.D. 372. How deeply he was interested in the welfare of this house may yet be seen by his extant correspondence. Every kind of sufferer was welcomed at the gates; especially the lepers, for whom no provision had been made in heathen times. It was, St. Gregory of Nazianzum says, like a little town; and, indeed, became the model for other houses of the same sort throughout the East. St. Chrysostom imitated these in his works at Constantinople; and Alexandria soon abounded with hospitals for the old and infirm. The Emperor Justinian, in another generation, converted into a hospital a building which he had destined for a palace, while Justinian and Theodora were patrons of a penitentiary for fallen women. At Rome, Pammachius impoverished himself by building a vast guest house in which the poor and sick were received, and Fabiola spent much of her time and strength in ministering to the crowds who filled those hospitable walls. At Cyzicum, Bishop Eleusius founded an almshouse for widows; on the Euphrates, the hermit Thalassius set up the first blind asylum of which there is any record. And in the fourth century, as now, the Church's ministers of mercy were chiefly those who had devoted their lives to God's service by a formal self-dedication to Him and renunciation of the world."

It is into this splendid heritage of self-sacrificing labour that our Church, by the revival of Sister-

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hoods, has entered in our day. The argument once urged against them, that they were of mediæval or Romish origin, or were an imitation of Rome, is dissipated by the fact of their existence in primitive times.

We may dismiss, then, this old objection, and turn now to another matter. In what work will a person be occupied when she becomes a Sister? An aspirant should have some knowledge of the various charities undertaken by Sisters, and of the special work to which this or that Sisterhood is devoted. Also she should seek to learn something of the spirit of its rule, the general character of its devotional life, and the special type of holiness it seeks to develop. It will greatly tend to her spiritual advancement and future usefulness to enter a Sisterhood for which by education, gifts, strength, and spiritual aptitude she is adapted.

A Sisterhood is not a mere humanly contrived machinery for an economical dispensing of charity, but a creation of the Holy Spirit. The Common or Consecrated Life, as it is sometimes called, has always existed in the Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit new societies are ever coming forth to meet the new needs of the age. The wind of the Spirit breathes upon the garden, and the spices flow out. When these spring from some real necessity, each new religious society coming to do its divinely ordered work is a creation and gift of God. It is the outcome of some special movement of Divine Providence calling souls to some special

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work, and of the Spirit inspiring some grace-conforming souls for its accomplishment. The Church now watches with kindly regard all new beginnings, and gives her approval to them finally, when, by the wisdom, stability, and fruitfulness of the work, it is seen to be of God. Sisterhoods devoted with loving affection to their own institute are thankful to God for all the new manifestations of His grace, and rejoice in the rise of other bodies to love and serve Him. Nevertheless, each Sisterhood has, or ought to have, its own peculiar work and spirit and definite character. Its usefulness and stability depend much on the exactness and fulness with which this is expressed in its rule and constitution.

In fairness it ought to be said that the Anglican communion has labored under some disadvantage in this respect. When the revival of the Religious Life began in her all traditions of it had died out. The good persons who first were led by God to give themselves to the work had an arduous task before them. The only sources of information concerning the technical details of the Life were such as could be found in books. They had no living authorities to whom to appeal in questions of difficulty, and through whom they might obtain the long-treasured wisdom of the Church. They had no Bishops to support and succour them; for in the beginning the Bishops not only stood aloof, but actively opposed the revival. There was much devotion and a great deal of learning on the part of those saintly men and women (now at rest with God) who were con-

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nected with these first efforts. Yet to a considerable extent the formation of a Sisterhood, its government, its methods of training novices, was an experiment. Besides, there were many new problems growing out of the altered relations of the Church and the world, with which former founders had not been forced to deal. The lost piece of silver, the Religious Life, had to be found in the Anglican Church by some holy woman rising in the night and lighting her candle and sweeping the house diligently till she found it. She could not have swept thus diligently without raising a large amount of annoying and perhaps self-blinding dust. We do not wonder that with us, as in the Roman communion, as if it were a law of their birth, every society should be formed only after much suffering and partial failure. And no wonder that human mistakes accompanied that which was the work of God, since it was the case even in the times of the Apostles. Those who forty years ago laid the foundation have admitted this fact.

There is, however, only one mistake which it comes within the scope of a treatise like this to point out. It is one which Sisterhoods are gradually rectifying, but which ought meanwhile to modify criticism. What years ago devout persons felt the Church needed was the work of Sisters; and, if in a large town a Sisterhood was but begun, it might be called upon for almost any description of Christian labour. This at times led to the mistake of a Sisterhood undertaking several works of a widely

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different character, thereby running the risk of injuring the unity of the spirit of the society, and in some cases lessening their power of training souls in the spiritual life.

Let us try to make this more clear. The Religious Life has sometimes been solitary. It had this form in its earliest days, when the hermits peopled the Theban desert. Then it became organized into community form, and was active or contemplative or mixed in its character. Then, in modern times, it has become more external and aggressive in its charity, carrying the spirit of the cloister out into the highways and hedges that it might compel the Lord's lost children to come in. But it has, at least, as we may see in the Roman communion, kept certain kinds of external work distinct. There it has not been found expedient to combine those which require very different hours of service and a different sort of training. We see this, for example, in one Roman religious order giving itself to penitentiary work only. It is, indeed, something most noble. This, we may observe, was one of the first ideas of Sisterhood work in the English Church. Bishop Armstrong wrote with almost imperative earnestness in its behalf. But this work requires on the part of the Sisters a special training, and houses for the penitents adapted to their purpose. It cannot be mixed with other objects. The Sisters who are best fitted for this work have a calling almost exclusively their own. So it is to a considerable degree with other great and most needed

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departments of Christian service, such as nursing, secular education, and parochial mission work.

While the exigences of our times have in part brought about or necessitated a mingling of various labours, yet the growing experience in our Religious Communities is rather in favour of a somewhat similar separation to that which has been found wise in the Roman Church.

But, having said this, one advantageous consequence of this combination of works should be noted. An aspirant is likely to find in any of our Sisterhoods some department suited to her capacity, whatever it may be, though each Community may have branches of work especially distinguishing it.

The rule and work of some Sisterhoods requires more physical strength than that of others; a matter an aspirant of delicate constitution should consider, as also to what kind or type of the Religious Life she is drawn. Our Sisterhoods are all excellent; each having its own special points of interest and attraction. Every one must appreciate the nobly heroic work done by those who devote themselves to the care of the sick and suffering in hospitals or their own homes, and by those who give their lives for Christ's sake to the self-denying and laborious task of the school-teacher, and of those especially who do penitentiary work. The Church readily realizes the value of these services, and also of Sisterhoods whose object is to aid the clergy in what we may call parochial mission work. But in consequence of the different character of the outward

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work of each Sisterhood there must exist to some extent a difference in the course of training, in the spiritual ideal, in the way of expressing the Life, and also in the habits of devotion. So that, besides her natural gifts and fitness for the external labour, the aspirant should consider whether she be drawn to an especially devotional life — one of reparation, of intercession, of seeking to make known the Faith and win souls to Christ. If so, a Sisterhood having this as its chief object would be more suitable for her; and there are to be found in England, Scotland, and America those which, so to speak, emphasize this side of the Religious Life.

It would be easy to fill many pages with a list of the number of institutions, orphanages, homes for the aged, hospitals of various kinds, penitentiaries, schools, etc., now under the care of Sisters, and with the accounts given by disinterested persons of the good deeds done by them. The extent and excellence of their work is very commonly admitted. Yet, in view of it all, and even of the Church's exigences, when the practical question arises — Why should I not give myself to this work, or allow those under my care to engage in it? a further query sometimes presents itself: Could not these things be done by those living in their own homes?

If persons wish to devote their lives to the service of God, and to practical benevolence, what need requires them to leave their homes? Is there not work enough lying right about them in their own families and parishes which is equally necessary,

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and which can be done in a more simple and unpretentious fashion? What is the benefit to the Church, or to the individual, in leaving home in order to give one's self to the service of Christ?

So far as the Church is concerned the question has been answered many times, and perhaps no more forcibly and earnestly than in the words of the report to the General Convention of the Church in the United States by the committee to whom the matter of Sisterhoods was referred in 1871, and which report was adopted.

"The prejudice which identifies every such movement with the false and pernicious system of the Church of Rome, and would forget the pure and living Church of the early ages which adopted such instrumentalities for the great work of charity she was sent into the world to do, has too long kept the Church in apathy and quenched the spirit which has been poured out upon her daughters yearning to consecrate themselves, as the Phœbes and Priscillas of Apostolic times, to the labours to which the love of Christ constrained them.

"Your committee believe that no plan or method could be devised for organizing women into Sisterhoods that would not meet with some opposition, and that there is no better way of overcoming this prejudice than by the practical exhibit of the wonderful fruits that attend that labour of love. That prejudice, we believe, is fast passing away under the deep and growing conviction of the need of such organizations. There is a vast work of benevolence

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among the masses that women only can do. There is need of their gentle and God-ordained sympathy in every city, village, and hamlet in our land. In the training of the young, the care of the sick and the destitute, in all those offices which require deep interest, delicate tact, and untiring devotion, woman has been endowed for the work; *but amid the manifold duties and distractions of ordinary life* she cannot devote herself successfully to this great work of ministering to the needy. *She needs to be exempt from domestic cares*, or her life and labours in this cause will be uncertain and unreliable. Entire self-consecration to Christ and His work is an essential requisite to her efficiency. Nor can she work effectually while alone, separated from that general sympathy of consociation with those whose common voice and interest would help to guide, sustain, and comfort her. Thousands of devoted women in the Church are left in cold and cheerless isolation of unaided effort, and often waste precious powers and labours, which, *if gathered into an organized agency*, would redound to the holy joy and success of the worker; and, more, to the glory of God and good-will and blessing to men."

The advantages of organization need not be dwelt upon in our day, nor that of skilled and trained labour. While living in her own house any devoted unmarried Christian woman may engage in much Church work, but it must be admitted that she becomes a far more efficient instrument for Christ's service when entirely dedicated to it and a trained

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member of a Christian community. Yet the strongest element of her efficiency, and that which she cannot possess at home, comes from the very fact that she does leave home, its comforts, and its society, to give herself, as Christ did, to those she would help in His name. She comes down from her position to help others. This mark of sacrifice is unmistakably stamped upon her life. The poor, the suffering, the distressed, instinctively feel this, and the heart-doors of the inner life are open to the Sister. She embodies something of that spirit and its power that moves to elevate mankind.

"How probe an unfelt evil?
Wouldst thou be the poor man's friend? must freeze with him,
Test sleepless hunger, let thy crippled back
Ache o'er the endless furrow; how was He,
The Blessed One, made perfect? why, by grief —
The fellowship of voluntary grief —
He read the tear-stained book of poor men's toils,
As I must learn to read it."

So reading and so learning the Sister becomes an instrument of blessing she cannot be while at home. Hers is not a life of worldly, calculating philanthropy, aiming at a maximum of result at a minimum of personal cost. "Philanthropy," as it has been said, "begins and ends with man; charity begins with God, and loves and blesses man for God's sake. Philanthropy is a social principle, while of Charity the motive is exclusively religious." The Sister's

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work springs from her love of Christ, and of humanity for which He died. A lady once offered herself and services at a well-known institution, and was asked by the pastor what was her motive in doing so. She replied that it was love and pity for suffering humanity that induced her to wish to help her fellow-creatures. The answer did not satisfy him, and he declined her application in these words: "When I can meet you at the foot of the Cross of Christ, and find that love for Him is the ground of your wish, then, and not till then, we can welcome you among us."

Coming for love of Christ, and giving herself to Christ, the Sister works for Christ, and so He works through her. His work does not confine itself to the recipients of the Sister's acts of charity. He speaks through her to a wider audience, and His word, embodied in her life of sacrifice, goes forth with power. The Church needs Sisters, not merely for the work they do, but because through them are preached the most effective sermons. "Perhaps," wrote Voltaire, that great scoffer at Christianity, "perhaps there is nothing greater on earth than the sacrifice which a delicate sex makes of beauty, youth, and often of high birth, to relieve in hospitals those human miseries of which the sight is so humiliating to pride and so revolting to delicacy."

"Sisters of Mercy," says Canon Liddon,[1] "are by the very force of their outward habit of life a

[1] Sermon "A Sister's Work."

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standing proclamation of the *supreme importance* of the eternal world and of all that bears upon it. If they did nothing else, they do this: they advertise prominently before the eyes of men the claims of religion, the interests of the human soul. . . . Many a man asks himself the question, as he notes them quietly threading our streets on their errands of love, why this or that lady of his acquaintance should retire from society and devote herself to prayer and ministries of mercy; it may be against the remonstrances of friends, and certainly in spite of contemptuous and avowed dislike of the general irreligious public. One answer is that she deliberately thinks God's service a serious life-absorbing thing, and that she is willing to venture this world for the sake of the next. He may not agree; but, if he is fair and reasonable, he at least respects her. His own faith is much too feeble a thing to warrant any such efforts after the kingdom of the unseen; but he does justice to a stronger faith than his own — he recognizes its consistency; he is too generous to depreciate a virtue which as yet he does not mean to imitate. Now and then, perhaps, the question presents itself to him: If the eternal world be a reality, may not her line be the line of common-sense? What if, after all, she should be right?"

That she is right no Christian parent can doubt. Why, then, should she not, if really suited for the Life, and if she be truly called to it, be allowed to serve Christ in the most effective way possible on earth for her, and have her special place of glory

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when the Ever-Blessed One shall come, in all the magnificence of His final triumph, to give to all His dear ones, those who have laboured, and those who have given labourers to Him, according as their work hath been?

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CHAPTER IV

OF THE INTERNAL GOVERNMENT AND LIFE

The History of Sisterhoods — The Classes of Christian Women found in the New Testament; Deaconesses, Ecclesiastical Widows, Virgins — The Sister the Spiritual Descendant of the Last — Their Internal Government naturally based on that of Family Life — The office of Abbess or Mother — The Relation of the Sisters to her — The Spiritual Family — The Rule of the Community — Different Kinds — How Formed — Its Three Principal Subjects — The Object and Government of the Society — The Character of the Rules, of the Work, of the Spiritual Life — Election of the Mother — How Often — Her Powers — Appointment of other Officers — A Description of the Sister's Day — Considerations addressed to the Aspirant, to the Parent.

A CLEARER idea of a Sisterhood will be obtained if we give some details of the government and life.

It may be observed that in the earliest times there existed an order of religious women. These women, though specially dedicated to Christ's service, were, however, until protected by the State, unable to combine for community life. They were divided, as we learn from Holy Scripture, into three classes: the Deaconesses, the Ecclesiastical widows, and the dedicated Virgins. By noticing these distinctions we shall see how the present government of Sisterhoods gradually arose.

The deaconess was a Church officer. Such was Phœbe, who is called (Rom. xvi. 1) a servant (*διάκονον*) of the Church. Such also was probably the Mary of whose labours St. Paul makes mention in the same chapter.

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The necessity for the service of Deaconesses in the extension of the Gospel arose from the social position women occupied in the East, and the customs which regulated intercourse with them. It belonged to their office to be present at the interviews which took place between the clergy and the female members of their flocks. Their presence protected the reputation of the clergy and the Church from scandals. It was also a part of their work to instruct the women, who were preparing to receive Baptism, in the elements of the faith and the customs of the Church. They attended the female candidates at the reception of that holy Sacrament, which was then administered by immersion, and brought them properly clad to the font. In the ceremony of anointing with the consecrated oil, the minister anointed the forehead only, and the Deaconess the other members of the body. They had charge of the doors on the women's side of the church, as the Ostiarii had charge of those on the men's side. According to the strictness of Church discipline at that time, they were obliged to know whom to admit and to examine the commendatory letters presented by strangers. They assigned to the different classes of worshippers, namely, the dedicated virgins, the matrons, the catechumens, the penitents, who then sat apart, their respective places. They also had care of the widows and orphans, of the sick and the poor, who were dependent on the Church's bounty, and so needed her care. They accompanied, at times, the Apostles on their travels, and, properly,

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at the expense of the Church. It is probably to this custom of the Apostles, who themselves had left all (St. Matt. xix.) to follow Christ and were unmarried or widowers, that reference is made by St. Paul in I Cor. ix. 5. He claims that he, as well as others, might lead about a woman (γυναῖκα), not necessarily a wife, but, as explained by the preceding words, a female church-worker, "a sister," to aid him in his labours. The Deaconess might be sent as bearer of the Apostolic epistle, as we know was the case of Phœbe (Rom. xvi. 1), and later, in times of persecution, she was often a medium of communication between the Bishops and clergy and their scattered people. Being Church officers, like the Deacons, they were appointed by the Bishop, and were under his direction. The ordinary Church rule made forty the customary age for admitting a Deaconess. They lasted in the Western Church until the sixth century, and until the eighth in the East.

In addition to these active Deaconesses, and as forming a portion of the one "tagma" or order of the dedicated life, is found in Holy Scripture the class of Ecclesiastical widows. St. Paul gives a full account of them in the fifth chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy. He speaks of the natural widow, of her life and duty in the first eight verses. Then (from ver. 8 to 16) he describes the Ecclesiastical widow and gives rules for her admission, and for the placing of her name on the Church's roll. This enrollment implied a dedication to the widowed

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estate from which it was a sin to withdraw (ver. 12). St. Paul, therefore, would not have the younger widows enrolled (ver. 11, 13), nor any save those who, according to the rule laid down for the Bishops (I Tim. iii. 2) and Deacons (I Tim. iii. 12), were but once married, "having been the wife of one man" (I Tim. v. 9). They were to be also persons well reputed for good works, and be sixty years of age. And, since the Church became responsible to aid them pecuniarily, he would not have any received whose relatives (ver. 16) could support them. From the rule limiting them, alike with the clergy, to but one marriage, it may be, as Canon Carter suggests, that they occupied some official position in carrying on some Church work, probably overlooking the younger widows and the recipients of the Church's alms. While the work of the Deaconess was of a more active character, that of those Ecclesiastical widows, like holy Anna and others, who waited in the Temple, was of a contemplative nature, "serving God," as their Jewish sisters had done before, "by fastings and prayers night and day."

But along with the active Deaconesses and the Professed widows there were women entered on the ecclesiastical registers as belonging to a class of persons who, for the love of Christ, had entirely dedicated themselves to Him in a single life. The Virgins were those who chose virginity that they might with more undistracted mind serve the Lord. They were sometimes included under the name of

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"widow," which was probably used as a general term in Holy Scripture to designate the entire order of consecrated women. It was certainly so used in sub-apostolic times, as may be seen from the writings of St. Ignatius and St. Clement. Belonging to the rank of dedicated virgins, we read, were the four daughters of the evangelist Philip. That they made profession of virginity is fairly to be inferred, for had they been merely unmarried women, "to have recorded the fact," says Blunt, in his commentaries, "that they were virgins would have been superfluous and unmeaning."

The Virgins so called in Holy Scripture, and also known as Ascetics or Canonical Virgins in primitive times, held no office in the Church, and at first lived in their own homes. They were to be found everywhere. Justin Martyr, writing about A.D. 148, says that "there are many men and women of sixty or seventy years of age who were made Christ's disciples in their youth and remained in a state of virginity; and I declare I can point out such persons in every rank of society."

Exhortations to such complete surrender and the tests of such a vocation are given by St. Paul in the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He there refers to married and unmarried estates in Christ as being alike gifts of God. The spiritual advantages of the dedicated virgin estate are so set forth by this Apostle as to show, according to St. Augustine, that he is speaking, not for a present necessity only, but for all time. This also is the

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view of St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome.

St. Paul gives also five tests of a true vocation (I Cor. vii. 37). The carefully-formed judgment, the steadfastness of purpose, the freedom from necessity, the acquired empire over the will, and the decree of the enfranchised heart held by a nobler love. And, exhorting the father, as the priest of the household, to dedicate his daughter to this life (not, of course, without her implied consent), he says: "He that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." "The virgin daughter's wishes," says Bishop Wordsworth, in his commentary on this passage, "are blended in one with her parents', but the parent gives expression to them." Given thus by their parents, it may be at an early age, these virgins made a public profession of their purpose, and were entered on the canonical rolls as Dedicated Virgins. They had recognized their "calling" (I Cor. vii. 24), they had been admitted into their "lot." Their estate was as recognized as that of the marriage state, and regarded as equally permanent. The English prayer-book bears witness to these two estates in the marriage service when it speaks of some having "the gift of continency."

After certain years of perseverance these virgins might be consecrated by the Bishop. This was a solemn confirmation of their espousal to Christ, whose spiritual brides they had become. They then received a purple veil, distinguished from their

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former one by being marked with a cross. In what regard they were held is eloquently expressed in the well-known passage of Tertullian, written in the latter part of the second century. "Consider," he says, "the examples of our sisters, whose names are with the Lord, who, not compelled by lack of beauty, or by advanced years, prefer holiness to husbands, for they choose to be brides of God. For God they are beautiful; for God they are virgins; with Him they live; with Him they hold converse; with Him they are busied day and night; they offer their prayers to the Lord as their dowries, and so often as they desire, they obtain honour from Him as the bridegroom's gift. Thus they have won for themselves the eternal gift of the Lord, and even upon earth, by abstinence from marriage, they are ranked in the family of angels."

The distinction between these different classes in the one order of dedicated Christian women should be remembered because, while the office of Deaconess passed away (to be revived, indeed, and for good purpose, in our times), the Sisters of the present day are the spiritual descendants of these Canonical Virgins, who were lay-women, not Church officers; whose existence sprung from devotion, not from the needs of the Church; who lived at home and under its discipline, and were not, like the Deaconesses, under the immediate direction of the Bishop. It belongs to the Episcopate, as representing the highest order of the Church, to formally approve of the Constitutions and Rule of a society

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of dedicated Virgins, but not to manage its internal affairs.

These facts will help us to understand why, when the times allowed of their leaving their own homes and forming themselves into communities, the internal government of such associations would naturally be based on family life.

It is in accordance with this idea that, while many modern religious societies, especially since the time of Ignatius Loyola, have taken the organization and discipline of an army for their model, and have adopted its titles for their officers, the ancient custom was to give the name of Abbess or Mother to the Superiors of communities of women. She, as the head, watches with motherly solicitude over the spiritual and physical wants of her family, and directs generally the work of its members. It is her duty, in language common to most Rules, not to value herself upon the authority she holds, but rather esteem it an opportunity of rendering loving service to others. It belongs to her office to make herself a pattern in diligence, to inspire zeal for holiness, to be patient with all, exact with herself, and cautious in what she requires of others. It is for her especially to possess a will trained to wait on God's will, the mind of a judge toward herself, and the heart of a mother toward her children.

Having a Mother for Superior, the relation of the members to its head is a filial one, and many of the same characteristics that give community of interest to the family and strengthen its bonds of union are

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to be found in the Sisterhood. Its members, like the members of a family, bear a common name which, in virtue of its spiritual foundation, is an eternal one. In the family all have some interest in the family property, but in different degrees; in the Sisterhood the highest and the lowest have equal rights. In the achievements and the honours which enrich and ennoble it all the members of the family rejoice; in the Sisterhood, banded together by the most thrilling of all interests and the most certain of all rewards, in the crowned glories of its saints, all the sisters have a share. In the family the affection springing from common parentage and early association binds in its loving fragrance all the members together; but in the Sisterhood there is the unselfish affection which is born of the grace of vocation for a community life and which is strong with the enduring love of Christ. In the family is often found a further unity, which comes from natural qualities and gifts made beautiful by grace; but in the Sisterhood there is the same source of unity, and as a permanent possession. In the family there is a unity which comes from common descent, and there is nothing, we say, stronger than the tie of blood; but it is this which is so eminently realized in the Sisterhood through the frequent reception of the Body and Blood of Him who is the unseen but real Head of the house and the centre of its unity.

In the government of the family there is a combination of authority and freedom which is the per-

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fection of all government. The same is found in the Sisterhood, but there is this difference. Family life is exposed to the despotism of selfishness or to the caprices of an unsanctified will. Its harmony and peace are often painfully disturbed by miserable dissensions. In the family of the Sisterhood there is this protection. Those only can rule who have been trained to obey, and the abuse of power is controlled in two ways. It is checked by the triennial election of superiors, and its use is limited by the Rule.

Let us now consider each of these — the election, and the Rule.

As to the latter, every Community must have its prescribed and adopted Rule. Until this is done a Society has not been formed. The Rule often passes through various stages of development before it is complete, and Societies have to wait a long time before this Rule receives the final sanction and endorsement of the Church.

Though there exists a large number of Religious Communities, yet the original number of Rules upon which all are based is very small. In the East, the great Rule of St. Basil is still the foundation of the Religious Orders of both men and women. In the West, most of the older Societies are based upon the Rule either of St. Benedict or St. Augustine. What is of passing interest to observe is that these great founders were enabled by God's providence to act in concert with their own sisters in the foundation of their Communities for women. Thus St. Basil

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placed the religious women and nuns of his day under the charge of his own sister, St. Marina; and St. Benedict had the same aid in his sister, St. Scholastica; and St. Augustine in his sister, St. Perpetua. The beneficial result of this combination of woman's knowledge of the needs of her sex with the theologian's wisdom has shown itself in the permanence of their work. And it will be found that in all the orders of women which time has approved the Rule has not been the product of any one sex, but of their joint action.

In our own communion, by the action of the Holy Spirit, Communities have arisen based upon these ancient, approved, and well-tested Church Rules, but adapted to our circumstances and the needs of our times.

These Rules differ somewhat, in our communion, in their degree of fulness, and each Society has its own characteristic spirit and line of work, but in each, as the basis of government, there is the Rule with the customs and usages which explain and interpret it.

The Rule deals with three different matters which cover the whole of the Community Life, and so secures its permanence and protects its members. It declares first the object of the Community, its spirit, the kind of work it undertakes; who are its officers, and the manner of their election; how members may be admitted as Postulants, as Novices, as Professed; how and when the general meetings or chapters are summoned; how branch or affiliated

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houses are formed. It deals with matters of property and gives the fundamental rules upon all subjects which are ordinarily embraced in a constitution. Secondly, it treats of the work of the Sisters, defines the duties of the separate officers, the general distribution of time, for sleep, labour, and recreation, the obligations of the choir, and the attendance on the offices, the common Habit, the clothing, the character and amount of food. The third part relates to the spiritual life and how the life of God and the union with Christ may be developed in the soul, how the spirit of charity may manifest itself in acts of charity toward others. Not always in this order, but practically, these are the three great divisions of a well-formed Rule.

The Rule in every Community is established with great deliberation and yet allows under certain circumstances for its modification.

The Society is protected by its Rule and also by the custom of triennial elections. Sisterhoods being essentially laic in their origin have always preserved the privilege of self-government. Their Superiors and officers were not appointed for them by the Bishops or clergy, but they governed themselves. They elected their own Superiors. They regulated their own internal affairs. Universal suffrage and the privilege of the ballot existed from very early times in conventual houses. The principle of triennial elections was introduced about the thirteenth century. In some Communities the Superior can be re-elected once, but not again until after some

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other has held the office for a time. These elections for Superiors are conducted in the most solemn manner. The strife of parties which marks popular or clerical elections is prevented by the rules which control the matter. No nominations, caucusing, or solicitation of votes by the candidates is allowed. Each Sister makes the choice of the Superior a subject of prayer, and then on the day of election places her vote on the altar. Being elected and inducted into office, the Mother cannot, however, govern as she pleases. Her powers are circumscribed and fixed by the constitution. She cannot make rules, but must govern according to those established with the consent of the Community. She may appoint the persons who are to fill certain offices, such as the Assistant Superior in some cases, the Mistress of the Novices, and the minor officers, but the duties of each of these is fixed and limited by the Rule. Further to prevent the arbitrary exercise of power, she is assisted in some Communities by the advice of Counsellors, who are chosen by the Sisters, and without whom in matters of importance she cannot act. The Mother, on taking office, promises to observe the Constitution and Rule, and can govern only according to law, and the obedience which is promised in the vows is obedience according to the Rule. It will thus be seen how far removed from the popular idea is the power entrusted temporarily to a Superior, and how she and the Sisters are guarded from the baneful influences of its misuse. The government of the Sisterhood may thus be said to

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be based on that of family life, wherein authority is regulated by law, and obedience by the principles of grace.

Let us now look more closely at this family life and see just what a Sister's day is. There is first the general time-table, which regulates the hours of the whole household; then there is the particular one which each Sister has, and which regulates, subordinately to the other, her special duties. Though this living and working by rule may seem repugnant to our ideas of the freedom and enjoyment of life, yet there is nothing that will enable us to do more and be happier in the doing of it than wisely-planned hours of prayer, labour, and recreation. The following description, though necessarily imperfect, will give the reader some idea of the divisions of a Sister's day. It must be remembered that the hours differ somewhat with the work of the Sisterhood, especially when persons are engaged in nursing or as school-teachers.

When roused to begin a new day with God the Sister wakes with an act of love to Him, for her first thoughts must be His. Repeating the appointed psalms as she clothes herself in her Habit, she goes to the chapel. How still and quiet it is: not filled, like our churches, with some devout but with many partially interested worshippers, the chapel is still with the intensity of united hearts and quiet with the hushed watchfulness of souls waiting upon God. The offices of Lauds and Prime are said, unless Lauds, the great act of praise intended to usher in

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the dawning day, has been said by anticipation the night before.

The Holy Sacrifice follows. It is the daily celebration of Holy Communion which is the Sisterhood's great source of strength. Jesus is the real Head of the house, and He comes daily to be in it. Jesus only, Jesus always, all for Jesus, is the centre and circumference of the Sister's inner life.

Some time in these early hours comes the daily Community meditation. It is always of great value, and a sign of devotional spirit, when this is made regularly and in common; and this is the most fitting time, when the mind is free and undisturbed, and can consecrate its best powers to God.

After breakfast comes conference, when the Sisters assemble for a few moments and stand quietly and in order while the Mother makes known any special directions about work she may have to give and receives any request the Sisters may have to make. At nine the office of Tierce is said. It is the first of the Passion Hours, when our Lord was led forth to His crucifixion, and is the hour when the Holy Ghost was given. It is followed either by another hour of reading and devotion in the Chapel or by the Sisters going each to her especial work. There is much to do in every Sisterhood, and there is no talent but finds occupation. It may be she goes to her classes in the school, or to care for some one who is suffering, or to visit among the poor, or to give instruction to those preparing for the Sacraments, or to the embroidery room, where Altar and Church

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vestments are being made, or to the bakery to make the Altar Breads for use in the Holy Communion, or to some household duties. There is no rank in duties where all is for Jesus. None wishes the place of another, but simply to do what He has marked out as His will for her on that day.

At twelve — the time when our Lord was nailed to the Cross — Sext is said, followed by a brief midday self-examen. After dinner there is a second conference, and then each Sister has an hour of "free time," as it is called, for rest or for any fitting occupation, as she may please. Nones is said at three, and work is resumed. Opportunities are given for reading and study, and for receiving instruction. During the day classes are given by the Mistress of Novices to those under her care, and perhaps by the Mother to the Professed Sisters.

Silence is observed during certain hours, and always in cloisters and passages. The slight restraint this imposes disciplines the mind and helps to keep the heart with God.

At six comes Vespers, bright with the joy of the Magnificat and the hopes of the Incarnate Life, and supper follows. Then comes the Community recreation, when every Sister is expected to be present and make the hour cheerful and helpful to the others. "The religious is seldom idle, and whether gathered in a circle round the room or in groups, fingers are busy with work or knitting, which does not stop the flow of conversation."

The bell strikes; and suddenly every sound is

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hushed, the happy voices are stilled, a silence falls over the house, like the quiet and peace of a holy benediction; and the sisters disperse to work, to study, or to class. At nine the bell rings for Compline, the last office, which completes the day. Thus the canonical hours of common prayer, rich with their burden of twice ten centuries of devotion, and united in one living strain of praise, wind through the day from its beginning to its close. After remaining some half-hour in Chapel, there come slumbers where follow

> "No cruel guard of carking cares, that keep
> Crowned woes awake. Beloved-given sleep,
> And reverend discipline, and religious fear
> And glad obedience, find sweet biding here —
> Silence and sacred rest; peace and pure joys."

If, then, the form of the Sisterhood's government is based on that of the family, the life which places religion first and finds in duty its highest happiness is based on that revealed in the Bible. It is not a life of religious sentiment, which is so marked a characteristic of the popular religion of the day, but a real taking up of the cross and a practical following of the example of Christ. It is a life which makes the best of both worlds, by sacrificing to Him some of the goods God has given us in order to be more closely united to Him and to enter into possession of Himself, the Eternal Good. It is a life which springs not from the low motive, as Charles Kingsley puts it, of "trying to save your own dirty

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soul," but comes from obedience to that call of the dear Lord, whom the willing heart can but obey, and from the love which would break the most costly alabaster box of earthly delights it possesses over the feet of Christ. Not, therefore, to those who are seeking to lay down the cross of home duties, or who would escape from the hardships of any life of labour, or who hope to shelter themselves as in some spiritual fortress from all temptation, does the Sisterhood throw open its doors and its heart, but to those who, having heard the call of Jesus, desire with docile and obedient minds to follow Him. And such true seekers this general description of the Life may aid in fortifying their purpose, and in calming the natural shrinking of the heart from a venture on an untried path. It may possibly make articulate the Voice which not only bids them come, but says: "It is I — be not afraid."

It may also enable those who are unselfishly consulting their child's happiness to see that the life she desires to enter is one which has advantages of its own. In it the members are free from many anxieties which attend the struggle of life. They are saved from many misfortunes, and perhaps some tragedy of sorrow. They are possessed of a home where all that they desire for their happiness is permanently secured. The frequent changes of occupation and the regularity of the life are not only conducive to health, but often restore it to the feeble. The extensive range of the service gives a scope for the exercise of all one's powers, and edu-

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cates and elevates them. A new and invigorating interest is given to life by the consecrated and enduring character of the work for God. By the concurrent testimony of many thousands who have tried it, the life establishes the empire of joyful peace within the soul.

Think, then, to adapt the words of another, of the many women who are at ease, the "careless daughters" of the land, wasting their lives in unprofitable pursuits or rusting out their gifts of mind, body, and estate in social nothingness; their existence aimless and therefore burdensome; then think of the thousands lying in ignorance of the Church, and of its blessed life-giving instrumentalities of grace, of the poor in their manifold miseries and afflictions, and the more miserable rich; then think of the Love which has poured itself out to save, but whose outflow of blessing is stopped by our cruel indifference and half-hearted service and selfishness; and then, it may be, you will pray, as the founder of one of our Anglican Sisterhoods prayed:

"Merciful God! spare us the anguish of seeing how much more might have been done than we do."

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CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS STATE FOUNDED BY OUR LORD

The Effect of the Incarnation in Elevating Marriage — It gave also a Value to the Consecrated Virgin State — The latter Established by Christ as a Means of Expressing the Soul's Devotion to Him — Caution not to find Fault with Others Differently called from Ourselves — How the Lord revealed the Religious Life in the Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience given by Him — How He taught the Value of these Counsels by His own Example — His Assumption of Voluntary Poverty — His Example of Chastity — His Practice of Obedience to a Written Rule — His training of the Disciples in these three Counsels — Why these Counsels were chosen for His own Guidance and Theirs — Why called Counsels of Perfection — Christ's Blessing on the Religious Life — What our duty in this Respect — If Christ calls, saying: "Let him" enter this Life, who may forbid It?

THERE is one other side of this subject often overlooked. The utility of Sisterhoods is admitted, but clergy and parents often fail to grasp the idea that it is a state of life established by Christ.

The Incarnation gave a new significance and dignity to marriage. It revealed the purpose God had from the beginning in making human nature so different from the angelic. The duality of the sexes and their union in marriage was to be a witness to the union of the Incarnate Word and His bride, the Church. "I speak," St. Paul says, when writing of this mystery, "concerning Christ and His Church."

Hence we may see why Christian marriage was made permanent and indissoluble. It was to testify

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to the indestructibility and eternity of this union of God with human nature. In virtue of this high office Christian marriage had a special dignity and grace bestowed upon it, and for this reason under Christianity polygamy was abolished and a Christian could have but one wife, even as Christ could have but one Church.

But also the Incarnation, through the moral as well as physical instrumentality of the Blessed Virgin, gave rise or value to the consecrated virgin state. Not that a dedicated virginity was unknown in the old world's life. The Greeks had their virgin priestesses of Apollo, and the Romans their vestal virgins, who kept alive the fire that symbolized the national life. The superstitious Scandinavian races of the West had their virgin prophetesses, and in the East the followers of Buddha adopted a celibate life. The virginity, however, upon which Christ placed the seal of His divine sanction had a different origin and a unique purpose. As Christian marriage was to bear witness to the unity of Christ and His Church, so the virgin estate was to set forth the idea of the self-consecration and sacrifice embodied in the Incarnation. It was also to prophesy, by its sacrifice of the present, of the coming kingdom of the Lord in Glory. It was further to declare the power of the grace flowing from the Divine Humanity and to extend its triumph. It would, moreover, ever tell the world of the love of Christ, for whom the suffering of the loss of all things was to His devoted followers a joy.

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This consecrated estate, therefore, was not the product of human pride, nor did it spring from a gloomy and false asceticism. It was not the outcome of Indian ideas of deliverance of the spirit from the bondage of matter. Nor did it rise from that mistaken theology which supposes heaven is gained by man's own merits, or that suffering and pain are in themselves things dear to God. The desire for this consecrated condition is born of the love of Christ, to whom, indeed, all Christian souls are united, but of a love so real, that as He is so would it be in this present world. With the keenness of love-begotten intuition it has fathomed the philosophy of Christ's own life, and seen how He made His life fruitful through the seeming sterility of death. Realizing how He endowed His Church with an unfailing energy of perpetual renewal, by letting the seed first fall into the ground and die, in the self-abandonment of love, it would go and die with Him. Through its mist of penitent tears it sees shining the love of God unable to express its fulness save by pouring out its life on Calvary, and so it must respond by an entire oblation of self and give back heart for heart, life for life, and love for love.

Christ knew there would be souls to whom such intense desire would be as daily hunger. He knew there would be some hearts so set on fire with divine love that they must steep them, as it were, in the blood of His own passion. He knew that some would so thirst to forward His work among men that they

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could not in conscience hold back aught from Him.

Do you, dear reader, in your comfortable home and surrounded by all He has given and blessed to you, blame Him that He has provided for the heart-wants of others? Can you find fault with Him because, having made for you life beautiful and your cup of blessing to run over, He has allowed others to share in His labours and given them out of His cup of suffering to drink? To you a saintly life is not denied, and you may grow in union with Him by all He has given you to love; do not hinder those who would be united to Him by ministering of their substance and following Him to His Cross. Your married estate has been ennobled by Christ and enriched by His grace; be diligent in corresponding with it and not troubled by the Master's different call to another. "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

"Each as they stand in their appointed lot
And seek to do His bidding, — here
Bravely set upon the right and noble duty
'Midst earthly struggle; or 'neath the sheltered roof-tree
Training with patient toil the children of His love;
Or in the cloistered home where prayers and service
Blending make continual praise, — each will of
The Master gain their blest reward."

The higher or deeper life, call it what you will, is open to all, and according to the degree of our conformity to grace do we become more and more sanctified; and according to the measure of our

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sanctification will be the capacity of our future joy and our nearness to Christ on His throne. We should, however, recognize the teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Church that, as Christ created and blessed marriage, so He likewise established and blessed another estate. For the "devoted" or religious estate is not merely an unwedded condition, it is an estate of the Gospel, revealed by our Lord in the counsels given by Him of voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience, as a special means of union with Himself, begun here to be perfected in eternity.

Let us consider how our Lord teaches this by His example and by His dealings with His disciples, and also the reasons for His choice of these three counsels as the counsels of perfection.

I. Consider first the example of our Blessed Lord.

Among the principles of His own interior life was that of voluntary poverty. Christ was poor by His own choice and act. Born in poverty, leading for thirty years a hard and laborious life, yet on entering His ministry He voluntarily abandons what little He has and becomes a homeless, destitute wanderer on the face of the earth. The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. All the riches of heaven and earth are His, yet He will have nothing He can call His own save the dress His blessed Mother doubtless wove for Him, and for which by the Cross the soldiers cast lots.

There was a deep meaning of devoted love in

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this voluntarily adopted condition of abject poverty. Man, losing by his sin communion with the Voice which walked with him, the gates of Paradise are closed and he becomes an outcast. The Voice, to which man, by himself, cannot return, comes out to meet him. It comes to lead him back to God, and so identifies Itself with him. Thus it is that the Word comes not with the outward glory of the first Adam, but takes upon Him the likeness of our sinful flesh; is born, not in some garden shrine, but like an outcast in a stable cave; joins in contest with Satan, not in a paradise, but in the wilderness; takes His place among earth's penitents as they come to the baptism of John; as representing outcast and guilty humanity, kneels down in the garden where man has sinned, to repent there for man with tears of blood; is lifted up upon the Tree to replace there the fruit He never took. And as part and foundation of this blessed truth of His identification with us, He stripped Himself of every earthly possession, and for our sakes, "though He was rich became poor."

Harder than the discipline of poverty, with its anxieties, its pains, and its scorn, was that of His affections. Never in this world has there been a truer or closer love than that which knit together the hearts of our Lord and His blessed Mother. The natural affection of maternity was increased by the grace-endowed love she bore for the Holy Child conceived in her by the Holy Ghost. It was a love returned by Him with divine tenderness and

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devotion to her, upon whose loving consent the mystery of the Incarnation had at one time hung. It was a love which had developed by every ordinary act of intercourse during thirty years, when every word of His was a hidden benediction, and every kiss a sacrament of grace. She had hung on every word and act, and treasured them in her heart, until that heart was melted into His and there seemed but one life between them, and that His own. She was by all Christian acclaim a type in a singular degree of that Church which was to be His bride. Hence, in that mysterious first miracle where the marriage of the Incarnate Word to humanity is mystically set forth, the only names of persons mentioned are those of Jesus and Mary. Yet, dear as that intercourse was, at this feast the Lord takes leave of her, with the saying: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Now the sword pierces her own heart, and what makes the pain to her so acute is the fact that He whom she loves best places it there. Whatever rewarding recognition He may lovingly grant her when the hour of His cross and triumph come, now He leaves her, trustfully abandoning her to the providential care of God. It is a revelation of her wondrous growth under His training that she discerns His purpose and without a moment's hesitation submits to His will. She immediately gives up what is so dear to her and, resigning her place of authority, says to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." By this voluntary detach-

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ment when leaving home, by this parting of hearts, this wounding of the most loved, by this subordination and triumph over the greatest of human affections at the call of God, our Lord manifested the glory of the counsel of chastity, or that choice of the love of God above all other love, which controlled His interior life. For chastity relates not merely to the government of the lower portion of our nature, but essentially to its higher, and is found in the single eye and purity of heart which has God ever in its embrace and lives in the perpetual subordination of the heart's affection to Him.

If voluntary poverty and self-sacrificing chastity are seen in our Blessed Lord's life, no less is the counsel of obedience. That which man most of all rebels against, namely, the dictation and control of another, was by Him most completely submitted to. It was more than submitted to, it was embraced as a law of His life. He was obedient from the first moment of His Incarnation. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God," is His utterance while yet unborn. Obedient to the law, in infancy He is circumcised, and obedient to a divine command He receives His name. In childhood He goes down to Nazareth and is subject to Mary and Joseph, though they were wise only with imperfect wisdom. At twelve He is found in the Temple, obediently catechized according to the law by His servants. The one utterance of the thirty years, made so emphatic by the surrounding silence, is that of obedience: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's

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business?" Later, He goes up to Jerusalem, keeping the prescribed feasts, and also He pays tribute to Cæsar; and thus, by His submission to His blessed Mother, and to St. Joseph, and to the lawful claims of the Church, and to the State, He gives to all men, in their common duties, filial, civic, and religious, a perfect example of obedience.

But beyond this, which was by way of precept, He voluntarily accepted a most searching and minute control over all His inner life. He did not come to save men, thinking His way out as He went along. He had a severely hard and most trying rule of conduct laid down for Him, on the perfect keeping of which the deliverance He sought to effect constantly hung. First, He was to be true to the terms and conditions of the human nature He had united to His own. He had to act out the divine life through it. He was to be true to all its conditions and at all times. True, for example, to the law of its infancy while He, the Eternal Word, lay as an infant on His mother's breast. Before Him were all the hosts of Heaven, and the secrets of all the universe were His. The marvellous panorama of all the orderly progression of nature lay before Him, and the forces of creation moved at His divine will. Yet not His mother's weakness, nor her oft-times fears or more enticing words or loving looks could draw Him to break that law of silence which made Him one with us in infancy, or exert that power for her succour or His own.

So also in the temptation. He had, when hunger

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gnawed within Him, the power to speak and the stones would have become bread; but He must not call upon the resources of His Divine Nature for His succour, for He must fight out the battle of humanity, and reverse its defeat by the powers of humanity alone. He was, moreover, not to act on His own judgment as to His course in life; it had all been laid down for Him in a written code. The types, the prophecies, the Jewish ceremonial which we read with curiosity, or for their evidential value, were to Him minute directions for His daily conduct. Every kind of sacrifice offered in the Temple had its special law to which He was continually to conform. It told Him, in its every detail, not only what he was to be, in His outward life of suffering and death, but of the perpetual oblation of Himself in His interior life. Every prophecy and Messianic psalm gave Him direction concerning not only His every act and word, but moreover regulated His hopes, His desires, His fears, His aspirations, His every thought. God bound on the first Adam only one command; on the Second, the Scriptures, which were His constant guide, were filled with them. All were to be remembered and executed with an exactness perfect in its interior and outward expression. It is in reference to this law of His life that our Lord so frequently says, "So it must be," and "The Scripture must be fulfilled." The will of Christ was surrendered to the will of God, and the mind of Christ was cast in the mould of Holy Scripture as the complete manifestation of that will. There

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was an absolute surrender of Himself to a revealed law, which tested every portion of His human nature, declaring what it must do, and, even in things otherwise lawful, what it must not do. The mysterious saying concerning the final coming at the last day shows how that in one thing this further discipline was planned for Him, namely, that His human mind might not gaze into the Divine Nature and know what so it might have learned, and which had for Him so intense an interest. His mind was to bear the mark of a humbled curiosity, a submission in this realm of knowledge to the sovereignty of God. So complete was this voluntary obedience that He did not speak of Himself, but "as He heard, so did He speak," for beyond the written rule, His humanity was under the control of a personal Master, and in all His actions and thoughts "He was led by the Spirit."

Thus our Lord became the pattern Man through a perfect conformity to the will of God, wrought out by the practice of the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

II. Consider we now our Lord's dealings with His disciples.

He first called them to leave all, as He had done, and follow Him. They were to leave their old religious teacher, St. John Baptist. They were to leave their father, their boats, their fishing, or their publican's table. His call had a constraining efficacy, and their hearts went out to Him and they left all, though they knew not all that following Him

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meant. They committed themselves to Him, and He made known to them the principles of His own life. They heard Him declare the counsel of poverty, when to the rich young ruler seeking perfection He said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow Me." When they disputed who should be greatest, He told them of that royal road of obedience He travelled, by putting the little child before them, and saying: He that would be greatest, let him become humble and docile as a little child. He revealed to them His own life of detachment of heart, in His saying, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." He taught the same law when to one of His disciples who said, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father," He replied: "Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead." Further, when in answer to their question as to the advisability of marriage, He said, "All cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." "There be some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

In what He by word made known to them as His own life, He trained them by a rigid and most exacting discipline. All portions of their triple being, body, soul, and spirit, were brought under the transforming power of His potent counsels. Trained already they were, for the most part, to endure bodily hardness, but the Master took them

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along with Him into His life of poverty. It belongs to the poor man to be despised, rejected, scorned. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household." "If the world hate you, ye know it hated Me before it hated you." He might at times enter the houses of the rich and sit at meat at the publican's table. St. Matthew might make a parting feast as he left all to follow Him. But the life of Christ was uniformly a severe one. He had entered on His ministry after so terrible a fast that the marks of that discipline of hardness never left Him. In the hour of His crucifixion, when His wasted and lacerated body was exposed to view, the scoffing beholders stood staring and jeering at Him. Into His own life of days weary with labour and nights given to prayer Christ took the twelve. They must walk with Him even if the provision of bread fail. He who will work miracles to feed the hungry multitude will work no miracle to bring them food. They must eat at times of the raw corn as they rub it in their hands while walking through the field. Hardy, brave, and daring as they were, He will take them with Him into such a storm as makes their natural courage fail, that it may become supernatural by the supernatural strength of faith. They were to learn the poverty of all natural powers, that they might enter into the wealth of the power of God.

Comparatively easy was it to brace them for their future work by the outward trial of poverty; the

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more difficult task lay in the discipline of the mind and spirit. The breaking down of their Jewish prejudices was not to be effected by persuasion. Christ disciplines His disciples. He seems to act arbitrarily. He begins with little things. He makes them violate the lesser traditions of the elders and eat with unwashen hands. He purposely violates their rigid ideas concerning Sabbath observances. He utters parables they do not understand, which force them to come to Him for explanation. He questions them concerning their dispute for precedence; searches, as with fire, their consciences. He rebukes them when together for their want of spiritual discernment and their lack of faith. He humbles them before the people by sharp censures of their conduct. He warns one of them that he is a devil; tells others that they know not what spirit they are of; and says to St. Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." He sends them out on a trial mission of three months, giving them most precise rules respecting their conduct. They must go only into such places; they must not go as they please or where they will. They must not go singly, but two together. He gives rules concerning their coming into a town; where to abide; how to depart. He regulates their dress, their food, their silence, and their speech. His directions read like those of a Master of Novices dealing with his monks. The Apostles were so to come under obedience to Him as to believe and to obey without question what He said because He said it. To others the command

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might seem trivial, or impossible, or absurd. They were to go to a place where two roads met and find an ass tied and a colt with her, and to take them. They were to go into a city and would find a man bearing a pitcher of water, and they were to follow him, and take his large furnished upper room for their paschal feast. They obeyed because their Master's victory was complete and their minds and wills were His. Thus trained in the counsels of obedience, poverty, and detachment, their spiritual lives were formed upon the same interior principles as that of the Lord.

III. We may now consider why these three principles were chosen for His own guidance and for theirs.

Threefold, according to the scriptural division, is man's being. "I pray that your whole body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless." Now in each portion of this triple unit there is a root of evil. Sensuality, or unruly appetite, has its seat in the body. Covetousness, or inordinate desire, lives in the soul. Pride, or independence, infects the spirit. These are the three roots of all our sins: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And for these three primal germs of all sin there are three specific remedies. The discipline of the body, or chastity, whose lower function is to purify the body as in its higher it purifies the heart. The spirit of poverty, which is the cure for the unbridled desire for possession, whether it be of knowledge, or fame, or honours, or power,

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or wealth. Lastly, obedience, which casts out the pride and independence of the human spirit, and so makes man humble and docile toward His Heavenly Father, peaceful and at rest within himself, and kind-hearted toward others.

From their great excellence the Church has been wont to call these three counsels the counsels of perfection. Not that their profession makes one perfect. Not that their observance is exclusively confined to those called "Religious," for in a degree they enter into every Christian life. Not that they are in their highest degree of practice anything but the development of our Baptismal vows. Not that their practice, even with Apostolic heroism, makes them ends in themselves. But they are called counsels of perfection, first, because they are the principles of the inner life of the All-perfect One. And, secondly, because their practice makes us like Him, in perfect union with whom perfection consists.

It puts a new aspect on this matter of self-consecration when we realize that, for the better fulfilling of these three evangelical counsels, and thereby the more complete union with Himself, the Lord established the estate known as the Religious Life. He explicitly revealed this peculiar estate by His language [St. Matt. xix. 11, 12], "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves

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eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." In fairness it must be admitted that here Christ is counselling, not a temporary unmarried condition of life, but, by a carefully-selected term, describing a state having a permanent and unalterable character.

As having such a character He pronounced on it a special blessing both here, saying [St. Mark x. 30], "He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time," "and in the world to come eternal life," "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

In the presence of this solemn utterance of the Master, the question of duty as to a choice in life, whether on the part of the daughter weighing the thought of an entire self-dedication, or of a parent hesitating to permit it, becomes one of grave concern. The fact that the Religious estate has been created by the Lord as an institution of the Gospel, and that the Holy Spirit calls souls into it for their perfection, involves in serious responsibility both parent and child. "For God, who gives us," says England's not least-sainted teacher, Dr. Pusey, in discussing this matter, "the transcendent privilege to be workers together with Him, leaves us also the awful power of marring His work."

It may be marred by refusing to obey His call; by choosing the pleasures of an Egyptian establishment rather than the hardness of the Christian wilderness; by casting some grains of disloyal incense on the altars of society and doing homage to the world's empire rather than sharing the ignominy and, it may be, persecution of the outcast Monarch;

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by letting the glittering baubles of ambition, clinking in the ear and deceiving the heart, drown the complaint that comes from the parched lips of the Crucified, asking the solace of our companionship and sacrificed lives; by an indulgent weakness which looks at the weight of the Cross rather than to the jewels of the Crown. Or, on the other hand, it may be marred by a parental selfishness which cannot give its best to Christ, or a hesitating faith which cannot trust the fulness of His promise, or worse, a blind worldliness, that wraps itself in an inveterate obstinacy and will not receive Christ's words.

Such a period of consideration of this question is a time fraught with grace and with peril. A time for the exercise of much patience and humility, and for much prayer. Here some soul is pressing forward, willing to respond to grace, and angel-hands are stretched out to direct her, and the blessed saints bend rejoicingly over her, and the great army of the martyrs, confessors, and virgins hope well for the promised accession to their ranks, and the heart of the great Monarch beats with the same love with which of old it moved toward those who sought perfection, and the assuring voice says to the child, "Come," and to the parent, "Let him."

Christ says to the one, "Come!" What subtle power is it that works within us to thwart Heaven's high purpose and turn our feet from off the narrow pathway shining with the safety of promised succours into the labyrinthine uncertainties and unsatisfactory pleasures of a worldly life? If duty bid thee

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remain at home, then remain. Duty first, and duty always. Duty is the voice of God. But if not duty, fear not to venture, for the "Come" of Christ is mightier than all the "Cannots" of our feeble hearts, and will sustain thee as it did one of old in his venture of faith upon the stormy waters to come to Christ. "And Peter said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee. And He said, Come!"

Christ says to the other, asking ofttimes the greater sacrifice on the part of the parent, yet with a pathetic tenderness that shrinks from giving pain, "Let him." Who is it that upon his own authority or upon the basis of his own experience, or through the following of the traditions of men, will venture to forbid what Christ approves? One limitation we know there is to all authority, namely, it must be "in the Lord." Christ says: *Let him* leave all as I left all; *let him* live after these counsels as I did; *let him* enter this estate I made My own; *let him* be so united to my interior life that I may reproduce it in him; *let there be* a wedded union of our hearts, and minds, and wills, that through him I may the better bless the Church; *let him!* What Christian parent, as he remembers at what a price he has been redeemed and thinks of what a true-hearted allegiance he owes his King, shall find it in his heart to deny his Lord's request and say to the Master, "No! He shall not!"

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CHAPTER VI

HAVE I A VOCATION FOR A SISTER'S LIFE?

The Manifold calls of God — Particular Calls not given for One's own Benefit Only — All Christians have Vocations — Times when the Way divides and Questions of Duty Arise — Am I called to be a Sister? — The Question perhaps Unwelcome — Two General Considerations for all Persons — Why we should put the Question — And the Needs of the Church in our Times — What, then, is it to be Called? — How to Recognize a Call — Three External Signs, Capability, Providential Orderings, Parental Consent — Interior Signs — Shown Early in some Cases — The Real Test of a True Call — Need after Decision of Discretion and Patience — Particular Directions for Conduct — Duty of being Open with Parents — What Priest to Consult — How to gain Grace and Strength for one's Duty.

ONE and yet manifold are the calls of God. The voice of God sounds throughout the world, calling all men into fellowship with Himself. It fills the Church of Christ with a sanctifying power, calling all Christians into an active correspondence with the energies of Christ's life. Its vivifying power vibrates throughout the mystical body, calling all its members, by the thrilling impulses of its loving utterances, into unity of effort for the kingdom's sake. All the particular calls heard by the individual soul are but single notes recognized in the vastness of the one divine harmony, as articulate with some love-laden message to itself.

Such special calls being thus subordinate to the general one of Christ to His Church, do not assign duties or bestow gifts as private treasures for individual enjoyment, but that some new blessing may spread its lustre throughout the City of God. In

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the intense unification of life which exists in the kingdom of Christ's Church, none can live for himself alone, and the spiritual gifts any one possesses are for the well-being of all. No one need look with envy on another's position in that kingdom, whatever it may be, and no one who has discerned his own call to any place or work may think: "This is given me for my own personal possession or advantage."

It is not, therefore, some few in the Church who have vocations, like the clergy or Sisters, but all are called of God. Each man has his vocation. It is that design for him which lay in the Eternal Mind ere he had being. He has been from all eternity the object of a divine choice. His Heavenly Father has created him for a special purpose, and has made him different from every other human being, and given him a special work to do, and loves him with a special love. Enfolding all in the embrace of His great love, yet no child of His creation but is especially dear to Him. It is a trite enough thought, but one tender with the freshness of God's never-withering youth, that "God loves me with an individual love, and is not merely the God of the universe, but my God, my own God, my own dear personal God;" and one's vocation is that line of life-duty or conduct, issuing out of God's predestinating love, along which He calls one, as along a road angel-watched and guarded by His providence, home to Himself.

It is not necessary for all persons to see what

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their vocation is. Some pass through life looking to God's direction, taking the daily step before them, and only, it may be, as they reach the distant hills of age, can see, as they look back, how the Divine Will has chosen for them and shielded them from danger, and made them instruments of His merciful designs. But there are important crises in all lives, when decisions must be made, when the question must be faced: What is my present duty? — when we must consider the alternate course presented by the life of faith; — when we must solemnly seek the meaning of God's dealings with us, and to what they call; — when the truth forcibly presents itself, that one thing only is entirely worth the knowing, and that is God's will in our regard, and one thing only is entirely worth the doing, and that is obedience to that will.

For at times God allows some signal trial to come, and all the land, like "the land of Egypt as thou comest to Zoar," is spread out before our sight, bright with the sunshine of earth's honours and delights, and a choice for life has to be made, as by Abraham and Lot, between the right hand and the left. Until the eye has been schooled to discern the glories of the Cross, and the heart captured by its self-effacing sacrifice, it can but be attracted by the brave show of earth's royalties, or by the fair landscape where lies the sheltered home, embowered in flowers and childhood's laughter, and affection's living green. Until the holy will of God is recognized in its sovereignty, and the soul has trustingly

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yielded itself to its blessed-making control, it may seem that the peaceful rest of convent life is more to be desired than the harder and more homely task of caring for some aged and infirm parent, by which a loving Providence calls the soul into union with the Lord, in His own hidden but fruitful service to His foster-father St. Joseph. Until the magnificent vision of the City of God, with its many-crowned Monarch, and the saintly hierarchy of the Incarnation, and the Apostles and prophets on their thrones, and the innumerable multitude of the redeemed, shining with the internal glory of Eternal Righteousness, is in a measure participated in, the exciting politics of earthly empires, or the pursuit of scientific discovery, or the self-culture of the soul, or an elevating philanthropy, must command our obedient homage.

These and like cases tell of times in all earnest lives when the ways before us divide, and the soul is perplexed with doubt, or, it may be, assailed by fear; when thick darkness seems to blot out the sun at noonday, and the moon ceases to give her light; when we can only choose our way by the lantern of God's word, as it is swung about our feet, or catch the echo of some angel-voices to direct our course, or listen to the heart-beat silently responding to some inspiration of God.

As some are reading these pages, may not the question arise in the mind: Why should I not give myself to Christ in a Sister's life? May it not be my privilege and honour so to be united to Him?

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Why may I not be of that band of devoted ones who through all the ages followed Him in this consecrated state and ministered to Him of their substance? If there be those who along Heaven's high pathway follow with a special nearness the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, why should I not be of that company? Is it for this that the direction of a kindly-guiding Providence has at last revealed such a life-purpose for me? Why does this thought of waiting on Him in His poor, sick, and needy ones, of giving myself to a life of prayer, attract my heart, unless God has placed it there?

Possibly the question presents itself as a somewhat unwelcome one. It has been partially heard before and put aside as beneath one's social position, or as involving too much sacrifice, or as too exacting in its discipline, or as unsuited to our natural disposition, or as repugnant to our love of freedom. Perchance one may have seriously considered it once, but now, grown wise with worldly wisdom, the desire has faded. When the Voice spoke to us we delayed, and when we arose to open to Him, "Lo, He was gone." It may be the call never came in so pronounced a way as to satisfy us of its divine origin, and so we were content to go on in our comfortably devotional way without placing ourselves under rule. Perhaps we heard stories of the failure of aspirants, or criticisms on the conduct of some Religious, and have deemed it safer not to strive "to wind one's self so high," or we have never had the courage to think seriously of the matter,

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and with mistaken humility have said, as we dwelt on its privileged and wedded nearness to Jesus, "It is not for me."

Now, to all these classes, however they may finally answer the great question of their vocation, we would address two general considerations; one, respecting the call to the Religious Life, and the other, the place and time in the Church's history in which it comes to us.

First, you are not to conclude you have no vocation because you have no natural liking for the Life, as some of the best of Religious have become so by the very violence by which they gained victory over self. Nor is it clear that the Life is not for you because your gifts look small — as small as the widow's two mites — or because you can but gather up the fragments that remain.

Neither are you to decide that you have no vocation because as yet you have experienced no self-demonstrating and controlling call. It is true that God may in some cases excite the soul by such an abundance of grace and force of desire as to exclude all doubt as to His call. But in a large number of cases, without producing so powerful an impression, the longings of the heart in all its better moods may be such as to make it dangerous to neglect the obvious drawings of the Holy Spirit. If these are faithfully listened to, they will increase. We cannot stand still and continue to hear God's call. For God's calls draw us, as the cry of her child the mother's heart; and He allures us into the solitude

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of the wilderness that we may the better hear. God speaks to persons according to their temperament. He that draws the affections can enlighten the understanding. He that speaks to the hearts of watching shepherds by the angelic hymn draws the wise men across the desert by the leading of a star.

Secondly, consider the time and place in which God addresses us. We are living in times and in a Church in which it is given to persons to do more for God by embracing the Religious state than in any other period. The millennial days, when the Church was united by its faith and discipline, and Satan was bound, are over. The worldly-minded darkness of the age of Hildebrand and the darkness of the fleshly-minded age of the Renaissance have been succeeded by the brightness of this latter Satanic age, in which either the existence of any personal spiritual energy is denied altogether or a counterfeit supernaturalism is substituted for the true. Is the Christian dispensation, called "the last time" by St. John, drawing to a close? At the end, along with the prophesied falling away, will there be a heroic correspondence to Divine Grace? The gates of hell will indeed never prevail against the kingdom and destroy it. Yet there will come a time when the light of the moon will suffer eclipse and the stars will fall and the powers of Heaven be shaken. The convulsions in every national Church are but forewarning preludes of the catastrophe which ends with the victory-bringing

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advent of the King of Kings. All times of peril are good to live in, for they are glorious with splendid opportunities of saintly service.

As from the agonies of the French Revolution came Religious Orders filled with souls more noble in their devotion than even by their high birth, so it may be with England's Church. If she is fully to recover her lost heritage, and her daily Sacrifice, and her penitential discipline, and extend her borders, it must be by a large number of able, refined, devoted persons, men and women, giving themselves up to the Religious Life. A few thousand such will effect more than Bishops and parochial clergy alone can do to catholicize the Church and raise the standard of Christian holiness, and more than all the opponents of the faith within and without the Church can do to overthrow it. Does it not seem as if now, in the last hours of His contest with evil, and from the Cross itself, Christ were plaintively asking for some alleviation of His sore distress? And strange it is that any Christian should not welcome love's high privilege of waiting round that death-bed and holding up the hyssop of a devoted life to slake a dying Master's thirst for the consummation of the kingdom and the salvation of souls.

Is it not, then, the urgent and imperative duty of every Christian woman whose path in life is not already determined, to consider, What does God desire my life should be? How shall I best consecrate it to Him? And yet, if the answer to this

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question is to be the service of a consecrated life, it is a most consoling assurance to know that such a choice is not wholly dependent on our own purpose. For the Religious Life is not something we are to seek or to select to please ourselves. We cannot give ourselves a vocation or make ourselves Religious. Our being such depends on the calling of Christ Himself. He chooses the person, He seeks the opportunity, He bestows the needed gifts, He inspires the thought, He orders the events, He enlightens the soul, He makes the voice to be heard, He removes the obstacles, He offers Himself in so definite a way that we cannot, with reasonable care, mistake it. The voice, which pleads with the agonized earnestness of His Passion for our union with Himself, becomes articulate through His providence and inspirations, and is made audible in the loving heart by the Holy Ghost.

Let us, then, see what it is to be thus specially called, and how we are to know it.

To be called to the Religious Life is to receive a summons from a Person. In the performance of ordinary duty we acknowledge our obligation to law, but vocation is the voice of God to the individual soul. It is a direct message from Him, and it calls for a response. It is addressed to an individual, and the proposed duty cannot be assigned to another of Christ's servants. "The Master has come and calleth for *thee*." It is a manifestation of God Himself, for it reveals God in the heart. Not by learned studies or high speculations do we

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know God, but only in proportion as we hear His voice within. It is none other than the voice of the Incarnate Word, calling us, not to the performance of some service, but into union with Jesus. Enlightened by His indwelling wisdom, difficulties disappear, and in union with the will of Jesus the soul finds entire satisfaction. It is a call into the heart of Jesus, not as into a mere resting-place, but into its life. United to Him, He puts forth His own power and reproduces Himself in us. It is a call which, as we surrender ourselves to it, goes on continuously, progressively unfolding the graces of His life. The Religious is not a person who has once been called. The voice of an earthly master once heard dies away. The call of the Divine Master to Discipleship is a single act, but vocation is an abiding gift of the overshadowing Spirit. The Life that is born in thee is of God. It is not like some jewel possessed only of a limited value, or like an earthly treasure that may be exhausted by use. It is a living Gift, a living Utterance, a sound that swells out more and more distinctly within the soul as the years go on, ever fresh with the love of Jesus, ever drawing the soul into a more wedded union with His desires, and enriching the life with endless revelations of His Goodness and Beauty.

Has the first cadence of that divine call wakened an echo of desire within thy heart? Not in its final fulness, tested by time and experience, certified by the Church's acceptance, and authoritatively sealed

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with its blessing, canst thou now possess it; yet if truly called it may even now be discerned to be God's message to thee!

Now, in order to answer to yourself the question, am I called, you must observe that God's will is manifested in two ways: externally and interiorly. Externally by His providences, interiorly by His inspirations.

The external signs are these: First, the possession of those natural and physical gifts which are necessary to keep the Rule and be of service in the proposed Sisterhood. Of these something has already been mentioned. It is sufficient here to say that a convent is not for the reformation of the indolent, the undisciplined, or the hysterical, nor a field for the self-opinionated, the morbid, or the designing; nor a home for the feeble, weak-minded, or destitute. It is the court of the Lord, and the maidens there gathered are as to Shushan, the palace. A mind well cultivated, good common sense, a cheerful and contented disposition, a teachable and docile will, and some natural greatness and generosity of soul, are the qualities which most fit one to be a maid of honour to the Great King.

The second sign is such a freedom from family duties as will allow of one's rightly leaving home. Where there is an aged or infirm parent or relative dependent upon a single daughter for pecuniary support or personal care, the case is plain. The daughter should remain at home. There is a middle class of cases which can only be decided by a know-

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ledge of all the facts, and in which much forbearance should be exercised by all parties, and particular and wise counsel sought. There are other cases also quite plain. Where there are other daughters in a family, then ordinarily no reason exists why one should not be spared to the Master's service. It may be here noted that the call comes not only to the one drawn to be a sister, but to all the members of the family, and although all may keenly feel the separation, yet in some degree the sacrifice is to be participated in by all. It is a helpful, but not universal, rule that where a young person would not feel it her duty to remain at home, but might be married, she might leave it to be espoused to her Lord. True, there are other opportunities of Christian service, and duties other than those of home, which must be left. This is but God's usual way of dealing with us. He does not promote idlers to honour, but the faithful. He calls from duties to duties. In our self-importance we are apt, in regard to our work, to estimate ourselves as necessary to Divine Providence. God often calls His servants from most productive service to a most seemingly barren field in order to train us to trust to His providence what we leave, as well as to His love in what He calls us to. In this matter of vocation duties need not be weighed against duties. We need not try to balance our supposed usefulness in one state with that in another. To be a perfect Religious is to become the most perfect instrument for service in God's hands, and so to do the highest and most

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effective work it is possible for man to do for God. As there is no parish work of sufficient importance to hold back any young clergyman from being a Religious, much less should the parish or social duties hold back any woman. Save, therefore, in rare cases where high or State interests are concerned, no other than important home-duty need prevent any daughter from becoming a Religious. What we leave for God, God will bless.

The third external sign, although not so held by all writers on the subject, is the Christian father's consent. The Scriptures regard the father as the head and mouth-piece of the sacramental entity formed by marriage. He is the natural priest of the family. So that properly the privilege belongs to him of giving his daughter to the Lord. To this reference is made, in the judgment of many wise commentators, in I Cor. vii. 38, 39. If he cannot give his consent, and so approve, he may assent, and so put no hindrance in the way. God has indeed the first and highest claim, and the father should learn by his own love to trust that of the Heavenly Father. He loves our children better than we do, and He expresses His love for us in promoting them to honour. He, who has a right to take your child away by death though you must shed tears over her grave, asks you now to trust her with Him to be His bride, that you may rejoice over her espousals. And as in the call of the patriarch and child, of old, each took part in the sacrifice and shared in a common blessing, so now will God most

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richly bless and unite more closely in the end parent and child. The God for whom together they laboured, and in whom together they rejoiced, will knit their hearts together in an eternal jubilation of love and praise.

The interior signs of a vocation are discerned in the desires of the soul. All good desires come from God, and are His voice speaking in us. These signs of a call to religion may be tested by the questions: Do you desire the Life? What in it do you desire? And why?

God, who knows best how to plant the seed of grace, and how best to awaken the heart to respond, in some instances grants this desire at an early age. It is not unusual for a person to say: "I have always wanted to be a Sister. I do not know how the wish came or when;" or, "I remember, when quite a little child, it came into my heart." Thus, in old time, into the youthful hearts of Joseph, Samuel, and Timothy, and John Baptist, and pre-eminently the Blessed Virgin, the grace of vocation fell silently as light from an angel-hand. In other instances it comes later in life. God creates the germ in some by disappointment, by humiliation; the heart is empty, and it must seek rest in God. In others He brings it by fervours and aspirations; the heart is full and it must empty itself back into Him. It grows with an increasing gratitude for sins forgiven or for some signal succours in distress, when, with the Magdalen's courage and the Magdalen's devotion, it cries out, What shall I render unto the Lord

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for all the benefits He hath done unto me? It is developed into life by some text of Scripture, by some word of grace, or by the pleading cry of the Master in His Church's hour of need. It gradually takes shape in a desire to do what it can for His service, becomes more ardent with a longing to make some reparation for the neglect His love has received, craves at last a fuller sense of His nearness and a life closer to Him. It lacks now but little for its perfection. How is this to be obtained? The heart must catch sight of the inner life of Jesus and desire to be united to it. God loves souls with large desires, and loves to aid the formation of such desires. And so it may be that by some book or merciful providence the soul on its life-journey gains a view of the Religious Life, stretching out its arms and revealing God's eternal purpose for His chosen ones, just as, in Alpine passes, at some sudden turn, the traveller unexpectedly comes in sight of the Cross, and is forced to forget nature in presence of that symbol of surpassing love. Blessed are they who come to this knowledge of the Life. It is a knowledge hidden from many Christian souls. It is given to those who are called. They see that the essence of the Religious Life is not a dedication merely to works of charity. It is an entire surrender of themselves to Jesus. It is a new covenanted estate. It is a special and consecrated union to the Lord. He is bound to them as well as they are bound to Him. It is a wedded union to His inner life, a transformation of body, soul, and spirit by

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the practice of the same three principles which governed His Humanity.

Do you desire, for the sake of this union, to adopt these principles? This is the real interior test.

It may happen that persons may be able to say that they have heard an interior voice speaking to them, or have had some singularly confirmed dream, or have beheld some magnificent vision of Christ or His Saints, or that some remarkable and concurring providences, like converging lines, have declared their duty. No one should desire or seek any such signs. It was the wise prayer of a great saint: "Lead me, O Lord, by the common way." And no one should act upon any such extraordinary manifestation. God may use such means for warning or directing His servants. They are liable, however, to be misunderstood, or not to be from Him. They may be regarded as confirming and encouraging us, but should not otherwise be taken into account. Consider the Life: its end, union with Jesus: its principles, the means to the end. Is this end your desire? Are these means your resolve?

If this is your spirit and you are not governed by the desire to escape from an unpleasant home, or to exchange a laborious life for one seemingly less so, or by a wish to improve your social position, or by an affection to live with some particular Sister, but are willing to leave all for the love of Christ and give yourself up to be moulded according to the principles of His life, you have the interior sign of a vocation. He has given you the mind and will to desire

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what He would have you to be. You are called of God. Christ offers Himself to you, and by a humble recitation of either the Te Deum or Magnificat you should give thanks to Him.

Greatly now will you stand in need of discretion, patience, and courage. "My Son, when thou comest to serve the Lord, prepare thyself for temptations." Be careful not to make your concerns a matter of common conversation. If you are influenced by the vanity that seeks to make one's self an object of interest, you will not do for a sister. In the Apostolic sense: "Consult not with flesh and blood." "Winnow not with every wind, and go not into every way." "Let your complaints be made known unto God." "Wait upon the Lord and put your trust in Him."

If possible, go to some Retreat, or arrange a partial one by yourself. It would be well at this time to review your life, not in reference to your sins but to God's providential guiding and blessings. Eat, like the prophet, the scroll of life. Give thanks to God for all He has given you and all He has withheld. Make your Communions with special care, and for conformity to God's will.

Consult with some priest; yet not necessarily a Religious, but one who knows what the Life is, and is not opposed to it. The different kinds of clergy have their own peculiarities, which need to be guarded against. Saints may be found everywhere, but perfection in the world is formed on different lines from that in Religion. The member of a

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Religious Order is apt to force his own Rule into the lives of others. We who are Religious are wont also to be over-eager in the matter of vocations. Always distrust those who would persuade or try to frighten you in any way into a Sisterhood. Vocation cannot be made by man. "No man can come to Me, unless the Father draw him." Parochial clergy, on the other hand, are apt to underrate the value of the Religious Life. They are often unwilling to lose good workers from their parishes, and so are prejudiced. Or perhaps they do not wish to go against the wishes of parents who may be their parishioners. They are also in danger of overestimating the importance of the family obligations. The family is indeed of divine origin, but there are other institutions equally sacred. The Religious Life is one of these. When one said to Christ, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," the Master declared a primary and higher duty in His reply: "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead."

Two general cautions may here be given. Be open and straightforward with your parents. Never act in an underhand way. Do not be advised to do anything which is only to be told afterward. Such counsel is not of God. God does not need man's deceitfulness to help Him to accomplish His plans. And also do not allow yourself to be drawn into making indiscreet promises. The Apostles did not reply to Christ's invitation that they would follow Him when their parents were dead.

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If God shows you that it is His will you should remain at home, He will perfect you there. Where He places you, there He will bless you. The Law of the Kingdom is now, as of old, they that tarried at home divided the spoil. If reasonable grounds exist for believing you have a vocation, and the external signs do not prevent, act at once. To defer responding to God's offer is to run the risk of losing it. It is a serious truth that, though we may be eventually saved, yet we may, by neglecting a distinct call, miss the special crown proffered us. We may go on piling up a large amount of "wood, hay, and stubble" which will have to be burned up, and we "saved as by fire," instead of doing our appointed task and building the "gold, silver, and precious stones" Christ had designed for us.

It may be you will have to wait. If so, wait so as not to lose. Patience is one of the best signs of a vocation. Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong and He shall comfort thine heart.

Be loving in all your intercourse with others, but decided, because He has called you and you are not your own. Do not go over old matters in perpetual debate with self or with others. "God spake and it was done." If tempted to give up, look to Christ crucified saying, "This I have done for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" Listen to the blessed saints, weak once as you, but made courageous through the blood of the Lamb, saying, as you ask them how they triumphed, "Grace did it all."

If you are allowed to go to the Sisterhood, go as

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soon as you conveniently can. Arise and trim your lamp and go you out to meet Him. Acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the strength of the Blessed Body and Blood, with the counsel of the Church, with a single eye to Christ, you cannot go wrong. If you really have not a vocation by reason of want of health, or of the needed capacity, or from failure of Community spirit, or other latent cause, it will be shown you in the Sisterhood. Act then courageously, as you would wish to have done when the short term of life is over, and its honours and delights and charms are fading, when the darkness of earth, with its troubles and sorrows and cares, is passing away, and Christ with His welcome of reward is seen standing on the eternal shore.

"Blessed are they who, in whatever outward lot, are with virgin souls espoused unto Christ, in faith entire, and grounded hope and fervent charity. Blessed, whether married or unmarried, are the pure in heart, who seek to make their souls a bridal chamber for Christ, fitted by His grace for His indwelling by His spirit.

"Blessed, thrice blessed, they whom Christ alone sufficeth, the one aim of whose being is to live to Him and for Him. For Him they adorn themselves; His eyes alone they desire to please through His graces in them; Him they long to serve without distraction; at His feet they ever sit; to Him they speak in their inmost souls, to Him they hearken; He is their light, their love, their holy joy; to Him they ever approach with trustfulness; Him they

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consult in all things, on Him they wait; Him they love, even because they love Him, and desire from Him but His love, desire no love but only His. Blessed foretaste of life eternal, to desire nothing on earth but the life of angels and the new song; to be wholly His, whom her soul loveth, and He, the Lord of Angels, to be wholly hers, as He says, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." [1]

[1] Pusey's Sermon — "Sacredness of Marriage."

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CHAPTER VII

WORDS OF HELP AND COMFORT

Trials and Opposition to be expected — The Various Classes of Arguments Urged against the Decision — The Argument of Unbelievers — The Objections of Believers — The Advice of Worldly Wisdom — The Counsel of Sympathizing but Dissuading Friends — Duty to Consider Family Needs — What of Real Weight — Theological Opponents and their Objections to the Life — The Question of Vows — The Entreaties of Relatives and Friends — The Appeal to the Affections, "Don't break up the Family" — The Choice between Christ and all Others — In Colloquy with Christ, the Soul finds the Confirmation of its Choice, the Answer to all its Fears, and its Abiding Peace.

IF you decide to apply to some Sisterhood, you must expect to have your decision combated from many quarters, and by every kind of argument. Yours may be the privilege of a home filled with grace-endowed and peace-laden souls, where the heart of Jesus is the common centre and the interests of Jesus reign supreme. There it is well known that nothing separates, — not time, nor place, nor work, nor death itself, but only sin; and that every act of sacrifice for Christ's sake only binds all hearts more closely together in an eternal fellowship of divine love. Such parents feel that God is sealing with His approval their union, and doing them the greatest of honours, and that they are doing Him their most acceptable service, in giving their child to God.

But it is more likely you will be made to realize the truth of Christ's words, "I came not to bring peace on the earth, but a sword," and, "A man's

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foes shall be those of his own household." You will need to take shelter under the Master's sayings, "If a man love father or mother more than Me, he is not worthy of Me;" and, "Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

The objections raised against your proposed course may be roughly classified under these five heads: as the arguments of worldly wisdom; of unwise spirituality; of a personal character; of a mistaken theology; and of appeals to your affections or fears.

I. As Christian goodness always rouses the hatred of the unbelieving, you must expect to have it said that this notion of yours to give up your position, prospects, social duties, and pleasures, is a gigantic folly; that it only belongs to the superstition of Christianity, which is fast dying out; that if you will be a Christian, at least you should be a sensible one, and have nothing to do with this kind of mummery, which intelligent persons and the higher social classes simply ignore.

II. Or your unbelieving adviser may be answered by another counsellor, who will tell you that it is nonsense to say Christianity is dying out, for never were there so many Christians, or any possessed of more intelligent or better tested grounds for their faith, or any more devoted than those of our times; but that you have been led astray by foolish or designing friends, and become enamoured with a

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life which belonged to the dark ages, and whose usefulness, if it had any, has passed away, and whose introduction now is ruining the Protestantism of our Church. Yet another and fairer mind will tell you that Christianity is indeed true, and would not have you other than a good Churchman; that this dedicated life did exist in early times, and has some scriptural warrant, but that you can more acceptably serve God elsewhere; that you have work for Christ to do in your parish, or in the many societies to which you belong, or in the schools, or among the poor and in your home; that you have plain duties lying right before you, and why should you give them up? — why, with so many opportunities for Christian usefulness at your own door, should you go away to make others for yourself?

III. Again, a friend may come closer to your own line of thought, and say sympathizingly that the foregoing reasons are not such as to affect one who feels she is called by God to this life. "These good people misunderstand us. I believe in Sisterhoods, and wish them well. They are excellent institutions for doing the Church's work. God does indeed call some persons to them, and if God called you I admit you ought to leave these present duties for others. It is a true spiritual maxim that, if God calls, He will provide for what He calls us from. You, however, are not strong enough; or you are too young and inexperienced and scarcely know what you are giving up; or you are too old and your habits too fixed; or you are naturally so bright and

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gay and fond of society that you would not be happy under the restraints of the conventual life.

You will not refuse to give to these and like suggestions all the weight they deserve. It may here be remarked, however, that the degree of strength necessary depends somewhat upon the character of the work and personal service required in the proposed Sisterhood. With this you should acquaint yourself.

As to the age, the Roman Church has decreed that at the age of sixteen one may be professed, and censures those parents who would hinder their children from so early embracing religion. If this seem to us Anglicans decidedly too young, then entrance might be allowed at such an age as that at which one is ordinarily permitted to choose the state of matrimony, while profession might be deferred to a later period. The great care taken as to the final admission to the Life almost precludes the possibility of a wrong decision, while an early entrance upon its privileges as a Novice has its own advantages. The young heart offers to the Heavenly Gardener a most productive soil, and the habits of devotion are more easily acquired in youth. Yet God often calls those quite advanced in years. They bring hearts specially sanctified by trial, and often a docility of will greater than that of inexperienced youth, and a knowledge of the world which, for many practical purposes, it is useful a Community should possess.

As to your temperament, your powers of endur-

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ance, your stability, your general fitness, how can these be determined by those who have had no experience of the Life, or whose knowledge of your abilities is necessarily imperfect. You cannot well know them yourself, and are forced to suggest that it would seem the wiser course to make a personal trial of the Life, which alone could settle the question or give peace to your mind.

IV. But you may have to meet with some good and pious persons who, with the best intentions, will hotly assail you with the ancient and somewhat rusty weapons of their theological armory.

"Do you expect to save your soul by going into a convent? Do you think any amount of good works will make you acceptable to God? Has not Christ paid the debt for all our sins, and have we anything more to do than just to believe? 'Only believe and trust' — that is all we have to do."

You suggest that trusting, even "trusting your trust," with God is doing something, and that for your acceptance you prefer not to rest on anything you are or do, but solely on Christ, whose grace is pledged in the Sacraments and whose word cannot return to Him void; but at least one may, out of love for Christ, be allowed to try to be holier, and so less unworthy of His love, who has died for us.

"Do you think," replies your friend, "that you will become holier by turning away from the good things God has provided for our enjoyment? Has He not made the world exceedingly beautiful and full of delights, and spread a most bountiful table

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before us; and does He want any of us to go away into a corner and munch a crust of bread by ourselves?"

You waive the argument of the sanctifying power of sacrifice with one who cannot understand it, and good-humoredly say that when you consider all the attractions of a Religious House, its Rule, and quiet, and freedom from care, and its means of grace, you think that instead of a crust of bread you are getting the best of the feast.

"So, then," your opponent replies, "you are actuated by a cowardly motive; you are running away to escape the trials and discipline and temptations of life by shutting yourself up in a cell, or you are selfishly leaving your present duties and influence for your own spiritual gratification." Oh, no! you are able to rejoin, you greatly mistake both the Life and my motives. This Life is not free from trials and temptations. The life is a hard one. It is a life of sacrifice. It is a union to a crucified Lord by a life of crucifixion. It is a special union with Him wrought out through special trials. The spiritual trials which God sends in it are the means of sanctification. The life of a Religious is that of a Christian athlete. He goes to give battle, not to avoid it. It is not to escape temptations Christ summons him into His companionship, but that he may abide with Him in His temptations. Christ calls souls into union with His own conflict against evil that He may extend His victories through them.

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As to my motives, you may say, God must judge of them. I am not going into Religion to please myself, to have a quiet life, to indulge in pious reverie, to enjoy exalted feelings, to cultivate the emotional side of my nature. I go not because the life is one of my own choosing and more than any other suits my inclinations and fancy. If I did so, woe is me! I go because He calls me. True, He gives in the Religious Life special helps and consolations and means of grace. These are, indeed, dear to me. But my motive is no more selfish in desiring that life than yours in being a Christian. God fills the Christian life with many spiritual delights. You are not in any unworthy way to be called selfish because you find joy in God's service. God has bound these things inseparably together. You cannot unselfishly seek His greater glory without seeking to save your own soul, and you cannot seek to save your soul without seeking your own highest happiness. To serve Him and Him only; to be His and His alone; to be conformed to His life of poverty, chastity, and obedience, is to me the greatest conceivable joy. But it is what He desires more than I do, and it cannot be called selfishness in me without condemning Him. As a Christian, you cannot deny that He who says to one, "Go home," says to another, "Leave all and come." You do not question that He calls young men to the ministry who, at their ordination, declare they believe themselves truly "called of God." It must be equally possible for God to call women into His

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service, and certain, therefore, that they must be able to know it. By the double testimony of the outward signs of His providence and of the drawings of my own heart, I believe myself called by Him.

But again it may be said to you, "I would not interfere with God's work, if it is His work, but in this proposed life you take vows; it is this that makes the matter so dreadful and so repugnant to your friends. Suppose after a number of years you should change your mind. Persons do change their minds about many matters, and not infrequently."

Yes, you reply, persons do very often, but it is equally true that God never does. God is not a man, that He should lie or repent. Has He spoken, and shall He not do it? He has created this state of life, and knowing all my possible future duties, now calls me into it, just as He called His Apostles to follow Him. He says, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" — and whether I took a vow or not, it would be wrong to go back from His call. Abraham was under no vow, but he would have been guilty if he had disobeyed. A call of God cannot be abandoned without sin and the forfeiture of God's proffered blessings.

"Why, then, do you take the vows? They are not commanded in Holy Scripture."

Not explicitly commanded, it is true. Nor do we find baptismal, ordination, or marriage vows commanded in Holy Scripture. Nothing is said about any of these vows. God, however, has es-

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tablished these different states of life: that of the Christian, of the priest, and of marriage, and no less clearly the celibate one, and a vow is the natural way of expressing the permanence of that relationship to Christ into which the Religious is called.

"But would it not be better and nobler to give yourself to Christ's service day by day, and not work under the fetter and obligation of vows?"

Is not this, you may reply, precisely the popular argument employed to do away with marriage vows? But if vows are a help in the marriage state they are also in the Religious. They are the expression of love and devotion in both cases. If they are to be valued in the one case, why not also in the other? They may appear to others to be fetters, but if so, they are like the fetters wisdom binds on all her children, seeming chains, heavy to be borne, and shackles fettering freedom, but which, when worn, turn by the wearing into a "robe of glory" and into grace-dyed "purple lace." [1]

Besides, the vow is dear to God. We give thereby not only what we do, but all we are. We give not the fruit of the tree, but the tree itself. We show, moreover, our trust in Him, and so, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor has uttered the wisdom of the Church: "If the vows be prudent in the manner, holy in the matter, useful in the consequence, and safe in all the circumstances of the person, it is an endearing us and our prayer to God by the increase of duty and charity, and therefore a more profitable

[1] Ecclus. vi. 29–31.

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way of making our prayers generous and acceptable."

V. But if you can get thus easily rid of your theological and other argumentative friends, it is not so easy to meet those who appeal to your fears or affections, and who urge you to abandon your purpose for the sake of family peace, or at least to postpone it. You can indeed truly say that you do not love parents, or brothers, or sisters, or friends the less, but your words have little effect. They fall as impotently as the dissolving snow-flakes on an angry sea. The storm that rages in their hearts needs another Voice to calm the waves. But how can you meet the saddened looks, the tears, the reproachful utterances of mistaken love? By your conduct, so it will be said, you have cast a gloom over the house, you have disgusted your brothers with religion, you have driven persons back from good Churchmanship, you are making all about you miserable, and breaking up the happiness of your home.

How can you meet this? How bear the cross, heavy with such misunderstandings? How accept the trial that as a sword pierces the heart? Only in one way. "Go and tell Jesus." He has called, and will not fail to succour. When father and mother forsake us, then the Lord will take us up.

With the prayer that this little book may bear God's message to souls, the writer humbly asks anyone who has so far followed the argument in

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earnest about her own case, to read what follows, not in the ordinary way, but in the posture of prayer, and with pauses, and very slowly, and not to leave any point until she has made it her own.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE:

My Lord and Master, my desire is to love Thee and to serve Thee, but I am sore perplexed. Is it right for me thus to give pain to those I love? Mine is, as Thou knowest, the greater pain. Speak Thou, O Lord, to them, and in Thy pity enlighten me.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED:

The pain they suffer is not from thee or Me, but from themselves. I grieve that they suffer, and I wait to bless. Whenever their wills become one with Mine they shall find joy and peace. Then will they rejoice with thee that thou art called of God. Hinder not My work in them by yielding to the entreaty of their mistaken tears.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE:

Dear Master and most loving Lord, bear with me for Thy tender mercy's sake. If I know myself, I *would* give up all to follow Thee. But the way sometimes is dark before me. I cannot see Thy guiding hand, and herein is my distress. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." If it be Thy voice, I can go in this Thy strength, since Thou

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hast sent me. "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee," but give me, if it be right, some sign, that I may know the call is Thine, and all is well.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED:

I show My will clearly by those external signs which forbid or permit thy coming. I speak not now by audible voice, as when, visible in the flesh, I dwelt with men. Yet still "My sheep hear My voice," and some may know it by miracle, or answered prayer, or providential sign, or certified vision. But ask not for these. Walk, My child, by faith, not by sight. When I call, shalt thou not know it? When thy mind and will are so possessed with Mine that thou art willing to leave all for love of Me, and desirest to be one with My crucified yet risen life by the same counsels I practised, thou art truly called.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE:

Truly, dear Lord, this is my desire, to live for Thee, and with Thee, and in Thee. This is indeed my wish, to be a whole burnt offering, consumed on the altar of Thy heart, Thy will to be my will, Thy love my love, Thy counsels my counsels, Thy motives my motives, Thy life the model and mould of my own. But, most loving Master, do not many deceive themselves and think themselves ready to give up all when they are not? And so may not I?

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THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED:

Look, then, if thou wouldst avoid future disappointment, not at the externals, or at the work only, but at the inner life. Count well the cost before you build. Consider what it is to give up all and to be united unto Me. It is to give up all earthly wealth, honour, ease, in order to share My poverty, its hardness, its weakness, its often scorn, yet to possess its supernatural strength; to give up thy will by living by rule and under obedience, as I did, in order to be conformed to My likeness; to give up all other love to be My bride and be possessed by Me alone. Poverty, chastity, obedience! These are the bracelets and signet I offer. These are My bridal tokens and pledges, blessed with powers the world knows not of; yet the cross they make is a real cross, and the wearing of them is often trying and hard to bear.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE:

My Lord and Master, it is a life hard with the hardness of the Cross. This I know; I would not have it otherwise. Where my Lord is, there would Thy servant be. How can I please Thee better than by union with Thee on Thy Cross? Naught so unites as common toil and common suffering with those we love. All I have and am Thou hast given me, and all I have I freely give to Thee. It is not self, dear Lord, I seek, but Thee. Thou art my life, my heart's delight, and nothing would I have apart from Thee. With Thee, nothing is too

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hard to bear; without Thee, earthly joy is misery. With Thee will not the Rule be but a cloistered garden, shutting out the world and shutting me in with Thee? Will not poverty be to me a girdle, binding me ever by its constant pressure to Thyself? Will not love make all toil easy and all burdens light? Thy Word teaches me there is a sweetness to be found in the slain, and honey in the banquet of sacrifice. It is not hardship, or discipline, or sacrifice that makes me waver in my choice, but those dear words of Thine calling me to be Thy bride. It may be for those fair lilies in Thy garden who have kept unsoiled their snowy petals, but Thy very offer pains me. Now that I see Thee, I loathe and abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. All too well, even now, I love Thee, to be willing to disgrace Thee. Let me indeed follow Thee. Make some little place for me, anywhere near Thee, for I cannot live without Thee — but rather, dearest Master, as a humble servant than as a bride.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED:

Let this My pledge and promise be thy stay. Thou hast not chosen Me, but I have chosen thee. Those most I love who most desire the lowest place. Realize thy nothingness, and let Me be thine all. Thine but to assent, and obey, and trust. Mine to re-create, and adorn, and glorify. Man cannot undo his past, but I can make it as though it were not. I can cast all thy sins behind My back and bury them in the depths of the sea. I can re-create

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and make thee a new creature, and give thee a new heart. My call to the Religious Life is, as My saints have said, like unto a second Baptism. The fruit of all My victories are at thy disposal, the wealth of all My merits are thine. My robe of Righteousness is about thee. The Holy Spirit's blessing waits for these espousals.

"Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away."

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE:

O Lord, God over all, blessed and blessed-making, before Whom the cherubim veil their faces and the strong angels tremblingly rejoice, Thee I worship and adore. To Thee, Who hast made and re-made me, Who hast redeemed and bought me by Thy precious blood, and Who hast called me, I surrender myself, all I have and am, to be forever Thine. "Be it unto me according to Thy word." "Where Thou goest would I go." Make me what Thou wilt. Do with me as Thou wilt. Safely in Thee I rest, on Thee I lean. I will no longer doubt or fear; for Thou, Lord, dearest and most longed for, wilt surely lead me on. "The darkness is past, and the day-star now shineth."

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED:

Let peace dwell in thy heart and quiet joy. Commit thy way unto Me and I will direct thy going. Go in this thy strength, — "have I not sent thee?" Be humble and little in thine own eyes, so shalt thou

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find favour in those of My servants. Be of good courage. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "Believe that ye receive and ye shall have." "Ask what thou wilt and it shall be done unto thee." Renew daily thy offering. "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms." "My grace is sufficient for thee." "According to thy day so shall thy strength be." "Neither shall any pluck them out of My Hand."

LAUS DEO

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THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

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MEDITATION I

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Prelude

THE Apostles asked, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Our Lord put a little child before them, and said, "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." It was a startling announcement. It was in severe contradiction to their previous ideas. It betokened an absolute change of character. It implied the giving up of all they counted intellectually great, humanly powerful, legally just. They were to become self-annihilated, to be deposed from the preëminence of independent manhood, to return in spirit to the weakness and dependence of childhood.

Our Lord had previously answered a similar question when a young man had asked him, "What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?" Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow Me." Christ here gave the counsels of perfection. He bade the young man sell all he had and follow Him

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in His life of hardness and poverty. When the disciples questioned Him about marriage, He replied, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." "There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." He here announced a state of celibate life which voluntarily was to be entered into. It was another counsel of perfection when the Apostles asked Him who should be greatest, and He summed up all the counsels by the model of childlike innocence, when passion has not yet asserted itself. It is pure in body and innocent in soul. Moreover, it is under authority. It cannot do as it chooses. It is under rule: it must be submissive. It exemplifies the third counsel, that of obedience. Thus as we know, by these counsels, our Lord established the Religious estate. It has been exemplified by many noble orders these twenty centuries within the Church. It has filled it with its heroes and saints. Place before you the picture of the many thousands and thousands of Religious who through these ages have glorified Christ by their lives and deaths. They look down upon you from their thrones rejoicing in the knowledge of the extension of the life they lived through grace, throughout the Catholic world, and especially in its revival in the Anglican Communion. God grant their prayers may help us, their example fortify us, their virtues be extended in us. We are engaged in a great, perhaps the final, battle with

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the world and sin. The Religious are the elected Body Guard of Christ. It is glorious to think we are united with the victorious ones departed! "Sit anima cum sanctis!" With them in their dedicated lives of labour and prayer; with them, God grant, in their triumphant rest and glory.

Prayer

O Blessed Lord, Who in Thy great Love, didst give to us Counsels of Perfection whereby we may be drawn into a closer embrace in Thy Love, grant to us Whom Thou hast called, a greater knowledge and desire of this life, that we may, by Thy Holy Spirit, be transformed in character, and fitted to be Thy Brides. Amen.

Veni Creator

The Meditation

God made us. Consequently we belong to Him. He could not have acted without design. He made us for an end. That end was a special union with Himself. Our true life lies in our seeking this end, and in the use of the means needed for its accomplishment.

Christ has redeemed us. He has bought us. We are sheep, branded with the sign of the Cross, as the mark of His ownership. He calls us to His Service. The Service to which He calls *you* is the Religious Life.

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He instituted this Life. He did so by giving the three Counsels of Perfection: Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. They are called Counsels of Perfection, not because we are made perfect by adopting them, but because, by using them, they lead us to perfection. The reason why the Master selected them is apparent from the consideration of man's nature. Man is a triple unit, as St. Paul tells us, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. The three portions of his being were intended to work in harmonious subjection to one another. The body was to be ruled over by the understanding and will of the soul. The soul, with its reasoning power, memory, imagination, and will, was to be controlled or governed by its higher spiritual nature. By his spiritual nature man has knowledge of right and wrong, he worships and knows God. As the body was to be subordinate to the soul, so the soul, with its reason, was to be subordinate to the spirit. The reasoning faculty being given to man, not that he should thereby discover religious truth, but that he should better understand that which is revealed to him through the Spirit.

Now in man's present condition, there is a tendency in each portion of his being to rebel. The body wishes its own gratifications; the soul to believe as it pleases, and have all it wants: it is covetous. The spiritual nature in its self-assertion and pride wishes to be independent of God. There are thus three roots of sins in our nature, called in Scripture the lust of the flesh, the lust or covetousness of the

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eye, and the pride, or independence, of life. Our Lord in the Counsels gave three specific remedies for these tendencies to sins: Chastity — or controlled desire, as sin is unregulated desire, — as the remedy for the flesh; poverty, as the remedy for a grasping covetousness; and Obedience, based on humility, as the cure for independence and pride. These Counsels, while in a degree applicable to all Christians, are especially cherished by the Religious. Christ took upon Himself a voluntary poverty. He might have come in kingly state. He might have been surrounded by all that wealth can give. He might therefore have acted the part of a great philanthropist. But had he relieved the poverty of every poor man in Palestine, He would as little have benefited their souls as a farmer would who, instead of covering his soil with a fertilizer, should spread over it an inch of gold-dust.

Our Lord was poor throughout His whole hidden life, depending for His sustenance upon the money gained in the uncertain trade of a small village. Abandoning His home, He went forth, and had not an habitation. He said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

As the second Adam He identified Himself as cast out of Paradise, and was with the wild beasts and tempted in the Wilderness. We find Him not only suffering from hunger there, but during His public ministry, He was dependent upon friends for daily food. He remained in the cold, all night

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in prayer. While mingling with men, He was the greatest of ascetics. So emaciated was He in body that, on the Cross, they stood amazed and jeered at Him. He exemplified chastity in its highest mode of expression. He abandoned His dear Mother on going forth to His Mission. It was a great strain upon His natural affections. His soul was absolutely pure in its intention. He had but one desire — to glorify God by His Sacrifice and to save mankind. As He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished."

His obedience was something wonderful. He did not come, like an ordinary reformer, planning out His own work, or the means by which it was to be accomplished. God's Will was revealed to Him in the sacrifice of the Law, and in the teaching of the Prophets. He was to be the Lamb of God, the Sin Victim. From the very beginning as a child in Joseph's shop, He had the wood of the Cross before Him. All through His earthly life, He was controlled by the Spirit, "As I hear, I speak, I do always the things that please Thee." As a child, He was obedient to His earthly parents; throughout life, to the Law, to the special revelation of God concerning Himself. Up to the last moment, when He said "It is finished," He was obedient to the Will of God. His rule was, "Not my Will but Thine be done." Thus He exemplified in His life the three counsels which He gave us.

In His life He trained the Apostles. He took them

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along with Him in His life of hardness. They were tough, robust men, accustomed to the dangers of the sea. But He schooled them in a harder life. At times, like Him, they had no place to sleep, no bed but the earth, no pillow but the rough stone. They were at times so hungry that they ate the raw corn which they plucked going through the fields.

We read of their need along with the almost famishing multitude where He multiplied the loaves. He exposed them to unwonted perils on the lake, where they cried out for fear. He sent them out on a trial journey and gave them particular rules, like a Master of Novices. He regulated their whole conduct, bearing, teaching, order of life. They were to go two by two. They were to take no scrip. They were to observe a rule of silence. They were to salute no man by the way. On entering a house, they were to salute it. They were to trust Divine Providence for shelter. They were to eat such things as were set before them. They were not to go from house to house. They were to minister to the sick. Their preaching was to be limited to Israel and the announcement of the coming Kingdom. He thus tried them by a special three months Mission. They were trained in absolute dependence upon Him. They were trained in obedience to commands for which no reason was given. They were to go to a certain place where they would find an ass tied, and they were to take him, saying only, "The Master hath need of Him." They were to

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enter Jerusalem, and find a man bearing a pitcher of water, and to whatsoever house he entered they were to say, "Where is the guestchamber that the Master may keep the Passover?"

Christ took them through the Tragedy of the Crucifixion, and recovering them at His Resurrection, bade them go to Galilee, where He promised to meet them. They had left all, as they had said. They had left their father at His command, their business and money table, their old teacher St. John the Baptist, their nets and fishing. They were trained by His personal teaching, and ofttimes by severe rebukes, and at last were conquered men. All they had and all they hoped to be were given up to Him. The discipline they underwent, and finally the gift of the Spirit changed their characters. They were all natural men, but supernaturalized. They became Religious.

In this life, He trained the Apostles. The Church has ever preserved and developed this life. It became adapted to the needs of the various ages. In its early stage, it took the form of the hermit life. Men fled from the World into the Thebian Desert. As our Lord had gone into the Wilderness, they felt called upon to do likewise. It was there our Lord had wrestled with Satan, and it was in the desert that the hermit wrestled with the spiritual adversary. It was not to avoid temptation, but to do battle for the Church's sake against the great adversary. There they lived and prayed, and became trained by prayer in spiritual wisdom.

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Their teachings have come down to us as the ripened wisdom of the great Contemplatives.

Under the guidance of God's Providence, we find next that the Monastic form of the Religious Life arose. Devout men were gathered together to live in communities. We know how St. Benedict ruled over his Community at Monte Casino, where still his order has its Mother House and home. There the Monks cultivated the fields, laboured in poverty, said the Divine Office, lived lives of prayer. The monastic stage spread throughout the Church. The monasteries became the seed-plots of civilization. When the barbarians had swept over Europe, the monasteries became lighthouses of civilized Christianity.

Again, when calamities had arisen within the Church, when worldliness and incipient infidelity arose, and it seemed as if Christ were sleeping in the ship, the Religious Life came to its rescue. Then it was St. Dominic founded his mission order of Friars, and Francis of Assisi aroused the Church by preaching evangelical poverty. The Religious Life thus moved out of its enclosed monastic state and became a missionary organization. The Friars in their early zeal preached the Gospel of Christ and won multitudes to the Faith.

But lastly there came the great outbreak which is popularly known as the Reformation. It had its good and moral side, but in its Lutheran doctrines of total depravity and justification by Faith only, as consisting of an act of belief and trust, it

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was heretical. It was met in Europe by the rise of a new form of the Religious Life. These modern orders are known as clerks regular. The new orders took military organizations and were governed by Superiors General. They did not practise poverty to the degree of the old hermits, nor were they enclosed like Monks. Nor were they like the old Friars. They developed the counsel of obedience, and made it the basis of their perfection. They lived in the world, took parishes, and educational institutions. They rolled back in Europe the tide of Protestant negations and misbelief.

The Religious Life developed in the Church in both sexes, women as well as men. We read of consecrated lives of the daughters of Philip, as the Virgins; of the Deaconesses as Assistants to the Apostles, like Phœbe; of St. Paula, and St. Scholastica in later times. In the early convent of St. Hilda in Britain, in the Celtic period, and the Nuns under St. Gilbert of Sempringham. There were holy Anchorites, like Juliana of Norwich. And great ladies and princesses gave themselves to the Religious Life. On the Continent there arose great Saints, like St. Theresa, the great teacher of devotion and prayer, St. Catherine of Siena, wonderful in her wisdom and fortitude. The beauty of St. Francis de Sales' life found its reflection in St. Jeanne Chantal. In our own day arose Mother Barat, who founded the order of the Sacred Heart, with its thousands of Sisters; and Mother Julie Billiart, the foundress of the beautiful, educational order of Notre Dame.

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Nor without joy may we mention the orders founded in our own Communion — Miss Sellon, foundress of the Community of the Holy Trinity: Mrs. Monsell, the wise and loving Mother of the St. John the Baptist Sisters; Miss Byron, the foundress of All Saints' Sisterhood, sanctified by suffering and saintly in her heroic devotion to the life; the great-hearted, generous-spirited Mother Alice of East Grinstead; Mother Harriet of St. Mary's; Mother Ruth Margaret of the Holy Nativity, and many others. God has shown His blessing upon the Anglican Church by reviving, in her, Communities of men — the Cowley Fathers, Community of the Resurrection, Benedictines, the Holy Cross Fathers, and some others.

Lacordaire, a great French preacher, said in Notre Dame pulpit, that "this Religious Life is the fairest fruit of the Catholic Church." He implied it could not be established apart from the Church and its Sacraments of grace. Its existence in the Anglican Communion is a great cause of thankfulness to God and a proof of her Catholicity. The Religious Life has two sides to it — devotion to God, and devotion to the well-being of man. Persons do not embrace it in a selfish spirit for their own sanctification only, but in order that they may, by Christian charity, benefit their fellow men. In the latter aspect, it differs from the world's philanthropy, which begins and ends with man. Charity begins with God, and loves man for God's sake. Philanthropy is a social principle, while charity is essen-

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tially religious. Scarcely forty years had passed since the Edict of Milan had given freedom to the Church, than the Church began to make provision for man's bodily ailments. Sebaste in Pontus has the honour of furnishing the earliest recorded hospital, which institutions spread rapidly over the face of Christendom. There were boarding houses for travellers, hospitals for the sick, almshouses for the old and poor, orphan asylums, blind asylums and foundling institutions. Every description of suffering had its relief. The Religious Life has ever prescribed the two elements of devotion and charity. While it is sometimes said Christians can do good work outside the Religious Life, yet we know that in the Religious Life, through its organization and training, better work can be done.

How Vocation Comes to be Known

The Call of God sometimes comes quite early in Life. God spoke to Samuel and Timothy when they were yet in their childhood. It is not uncommon now to find the early signs of vocation. It comes with a growing spirit of devotion and a greater desire for our Lord's service. The attractive beauty of a life of entire self-consecration dawns upon an awakened sanctity. A spirit of self-dedication in part like that that moved the Blessed Virgin fills the soul with Divine aspirations. The trials through which the Church is passing and her needs give emphasis to the desire. The thought that this life

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is one in which we can serve God by sacrifice inspires the generous-minded soul. A growing love for Jesus, to be His, and His only, takes the heart captive. At length the inner leading becomes so strong that it must find outward expression. The soul so drawn, properly seeks the advice of some religiously-minded priest. It had better keep its own desire from friends, certainly those who would oppose its choice. Its parents, having no experience of the Religious Life, cannot rightly oppose it. Their authority is a limited one. They cannot forbid anything the Lord ordains in the way of Sacraments or the Religious Life. If persons are of age, they certainly have a right to determine for themselves. The call of God is indeed a double one. It is the call to the child to come, and leave father, mother and all, and it is a call to parents to give up their child. God, to Whom the child really belongs and Who has a right to the child to call it by death to Himself, has also the right to call it to the Religious Life. God cannot do a greater honour to a Christian family than to call one of its members, a man or woman, into Religion. To each, parent and child, He promises a portion and a special reward. To oppose a child's drawing to the Religious Life is to commit a grave sin, which often brings a grave punishment. No home duty which would not keep one from marraige, should keep one from being married in the Religious Life, to the Lord. A soul thus drawn inwardly should as speedily as possible seek to test her vocation.

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The inner Voice has its outward authorization in the voice of the Community. After a well-spent Novitiate, God seals to the soul its vocation by a Profession authorized by the Church. Upon it the soul may securely rest as the Calling of her dear Lord. Let us consider the usefulness of the Life, especially in our own age in our Church. There is no greater field of usefulness. Our Church is recovering by God's grace her weakened Catholic heritage. Probably since the days of Pentecost, there has never been such a spiritual movement in the Church. Women devoting themselves to the Religious Life become sources of great spiritual power. Their influence is not confined to the work they do in educational institutions, orphan asylums, and parochial work, but it is powerful through their entire consecration. They preach by their lives more effectively than the most eloquent Divines. They bear witness to the Gospel of Christ, the transitoriness of this life, and the proffered glories of a world to come. They declare more effectively than sermons can do the efficacy of the Sacraments, especially of the Holy Eucharist. They could not be what they are, if the Sacraments did not convey to them the graces of the Church, which she proclaims she possesses. It is to the Religious Life we must look for the deliverance of our Church from sectarian negations and a worldly-spirited Episcopalianism. As holy women rallied round our Blessed Lord and stood at His Cross, so they must do now. It is more to them, and more than

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they understand, that the future of our Church is given.

It is the call for a special union to our Lord, and work for Him. For women, it is like the call of the Priesthood.

The Religious Life, as it is most like the life of heaven in its obedience, purity and dependence upon God, is the best mode of preparation for it. It is the means advanced by our Lord by which we can attain the highest degree of glory hereafter. God grant its development and increase in our own Communion.

Examen

Many years may have passed since I entered into Religion. I was dedicated to seek after perfection. How far yet I am from that relative perfection which is attainable. What has been expected of me by my Community? How do externes regard it? They measure me by a standard above that of ordinary Christians. They look upon me to be recollected in manner, prudent in action, controlled in conversation, avoiding worldliness. They expect me to be ever controlled, without jealousy, envying, criticisms. They look upon me to be a model of holy poverty, obedience, gentleness and love. They cannot imagine me as being guilty of breaches of my Rule. They look upon me when away from my convent as keeping up the Religious spirit and being a model of edification. Is it possible, that instead of improving, I have become lax, sunk down into a commonplace Religious? Have I got into a rut, go-

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ing on in the way of routine, keeping rule, but without the spirit of devotion? Have I cherished criticisms of Superiors of the Society? Where is my old fervour? Do I need arousing? There is no person so hard to convert as a relaxed Religious. Shall I not, crying for mercy, return unto the Lord?

Colloquy

Thanks and praise be to Thee, O Blessed Lord, for creating this beautiful life, the foretaste of the Heavenly state, the Bridal Union of the Soul with God.

All glory, praise and worship be to Thee, All glorious, Loving and Adorable One, our Saviour, our Lord, and our Blessed Spouse.

Eternal thanks and adoration be to Thee, Who in Thy tenderest Love didst bring me into this Holy Estate. Eternity is too short adequately to thank Thee.

Pardon my short-comings. Forgive my failures. Accept me as I renew my vows and consecration to Thy Service.

The World is shut out, and I am as a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Thou hast brought me into Thy Banqueting House. There Thou feedest me with the Bread from Heaven, the Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, and Thy Banner over me is Love.

I get me in Religion to the mountain of myrrh, where I make reparation to Thee by Service and

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penitential Love. There I ascend to the hill of frankincense, ever to abide in Thy worship. Thence I go out to do Missionary Service, calling to the daughters of Jerusalem to find Thee.

Arm me with the holy weapons of Prayer, the Wisdom of Divine Love, and Grace. For our Life is not only a Bridal Union with the King, but a holy warfare on His behalf.

MEDITATION II

VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

PRELUDE

PICTURE to yourself the home of Martha and Mary. Mary is sitting alone, in prayerful meditation. She is sorrow-stricken in heart at the loss of her brother Lazarus. Death gives a new aspect to all our surroundings. Somehow the world does not look as it did before. A change has taken place which affects our whole nature. Lazarus, her invalid brother, had been to her so constant a care. She had watched over his every want, and marked with painful tenderness the progress of his disease. She did not expect he would go quite so soon. But he is gone. There is his empty chair in which he sat. Here is the couch on which his emaciated body reposed. There she ministered to him day and night, and by his side prayed. It

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was a holy home, sanctified by a prolonged illness. The beauty of Lazarus' character had especially endeared him to Christ. Jesus had been their guest. He had made Himself as one of the household. He had been their friend and companion. He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. His words had brought a new life and light into their souls. Their affections and their talk centred about Him. How they treasured up every word He had uttered, and every act they had heard of Him. The death of her brother filled Mary with a great heart-ache. Though looked forward to, it came at last, as it often does, as a shock. Murmurs and complaints to God there are none. Yet the tears must flow, and no tears can stop the heart-ache. Conflicting thoughts sweep through her troubled mind. Need it have happened? Could not he have been restored? Might not their dear Master have given Him, as to others, health? How her soul in its distress turned to Him. How she wished she could see Him. How she wished He might come. As it was that in the fourth watch of the night to the wearied Apostles toiling and rowing, so in her need Christ came to her. In her loneliness and anguish the message came, "Arise!" "The Master has come." He has heard of her grief. He comes, her dearest Lord and Friend, as knowing fully her distress and sorrow laden heart. And what a satisfying and consolatory thought. "He calleth for thee." Love understands love. Love interprets words of affection. Love gives to them

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a deeper meaning than they seemingly bear. "He calls for thee." He wants her. He had a personal word to say to her. He had a special comfort to bring her. She was dear to Him — all the dearer in her trouble. And it was no ordinary message as under ordinary circumstances He might have sent. She understood its deeper meaning, and she rose up quickly and went to Him.

Meditation

The Call to Religion is a personal Call. Our Lord selected and called His Disciples one by one. He did not make a general call for co-workers and ask for volunteers. He makes the selection. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." St. John the Baptist pointed out Christ to the future Apostles as the Lamb of God. But our Lord called them into Discipleship and afterwards into the Apostolate one by one. We read that He prayed before He made the choice. Their call was a manifestation of the Father's Will, and came with power. At His simple words, "Follow Me," they left their publican's table, or their father's net—their old work and occupations. They did not stop, as men are inclined to do, to balance duty with duty. They did not stop to reason out the problem who should carry on the work they left. God does not call idlers to His Service when He calls to work. He will provide for the work from which He calls us. We are not to make ourselves Providences to Al-

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mighty God, but trusting Him, simply to obey His call.

The Call is His Act. There is a difference between acting under a sense of duty to an abstract law, and in the consciousness of a personal vocation. In the case of duty, we recognize law, but in vocation the Voice of God.

It is like this: — A master going away leaves certain duties to be performed, but leaves their fulfillment to one's own choice. It is different when He gives to individuals a personal command, who act under the sense of personal oversight.

The Call, as personal, comes out of a real choice in God's Mind. How, we ask, can there be desire in the All-satisfying One? But we know there must be, for His speech declares His Mind. He chooses. No other being than the one He calls can satisfy the Divine Purpose.

The Call comes forth from the Well-Head of God's Nature and the Eternity of His Counsels. It comes and sinks down into our little hearts as the expression of His Personal Love and can find no home elsewhere. As an act of individual Love it demands an individual response. An absent master does not care who does the work provided it is done. But if a parent calls a child to some service, he cannot say to another, "You go," but, "I must go." We cannot decline a call because we think ourselves not capable, or unworthy. He calls us, always unworthy, that we may be monumental miracles of His grace. He calls us, not because we are capable,

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often just the contrary, but in order to show forth His power in us. He calls us, not to accomplish something for His sake, but primarily, and often, for our own sake. He requires our own personal attention, not to do some work by us, but to do a work in us. What He calls us to is not merely service, but into a special union with Himself. Now the Personality of the call is revealed in proportion as we draw near Him. We cannot stand still, or as it were in one place, and hear God's Voice. We are called into God, and so it is not enough to hear the Voice, but we must be drawn into it. Just as by necessity of love a mother is drawn from whatever she is doing by the cry of her child in danger.

We can, however, have no knowledge of God's Voice by mental speculation, but only by doing His Will. The soul that loves God, like Mary, knows the message that comes from Him.

Consider the individuality of the Call. God speaks to the soul as He did to Samuel. The voice on coming fills it with its own power. It makes a response, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Each soul is however different, and receives impressions in its own way. How different is the meaning of the same word spoken to different persons! Our own character gives to the word its own signification. Our own power of perception and receptivity give it value and power. What it means to us is more than we can explain to another. The Call of God rings in the heart with the vibration of Heaven. The Word speaks, and the soul is touched with the

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power of God. It evokes into spiritual activity all our faculties.

It calls us to a fellowship with God. It calls to a special companionship. No other can fulfill it. Christ has spoken to me, and never can unsay what He has said. The soul has become identified with His utterance. The Call is a death-shock. By it we die to the World. It is a Life-touch. By it we become quickened with the Life of God. It is a call to be a fellow-worker in fellowship with Him. We rejoice in the individuality of this Loving Call. He has spoken to me. God did not cause His Love to pour over the world as a flood of grace so that at last the waters flowed up to me. The Call singled me out. Wast thou unworthy? Truly the soul may so declare. But the fact that Jesus loved me fits me for His Service. Thou needest nothing but to abide in that Love. One by one we are taken up into that Love individually. It does not call us into the porch of a temple, but into the very Temple itself.

The Call is to Jesus. The Personal Voice is none other than that of the Word made Flesh. He calls us, not merely to follow Him, or to be united to His work, but united in a special degree to His own dear self. He calls us that He may be the entire satisfaction of the soul. He satisfies us by filling the intellect with His own wisdom and the affections with His own Love. He calls us in the truth of our manhood, and so extends a real sympathy. He knows all our sorrows, weaknesses and

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temptations. He suffered that He might help, by sympathy and grace. He has not passed from the remembrance of what He has suffered, for He is ever pleading His sufferings before the Father. His Passion, as He presents it, is the continual story of His sympathy towards us. Man indeed, passing from sorrow to triumph, forgets the sorrow, but Jesus keeps the sorrow fresh in His Heart. Called to Jesus, we are called, not into a mere resting place, but into the energy of Jesus. We cannot rest in Him unless His life is operating in us. Our whole life, like His, must be moved by the principle of Divine Love. We are to become published utterances of God. We are to be Missionary Epistles of Him. We cannot keep Jesus as an acquired treasure. Our Mission is to declare the Gospel of the Love of God, and to set it forth by speech, action and life.

Again: our Vocation or calling is in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that power is the power of Divine Love. The spirit of Love comes to fill us with an abiding energy of self-surrender. It teaches us not merely to cast away the things of earth, but to cast ourselves into the infinite welcome of the Will of God. It is a power manifested in weakness and difficulties. We must not be disheartened by the miseries of our earthly nature. We cannot pass in a little time from the life of earth to the life of God. The power of the Holy Ghost works gently, coming down like rain into the fleece of wool. We must not say our miseries hinder our triumph.

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We must feel our misery in order to triumph. A great general is not one who is never defeated, but one who knows how to turn defeat into victory. We must thus learn how impossible it is to triumph by ourselves. But let the victory come through the gift and love of God. If we were not left at times to feel the vacillations of our own will, we should lay too much stress on it, and not come to know the victory by Christ's merits and of faith.

God's voice is revealed in us as our wills and affections correspond and are identified with the Divine Energy.

Our vocation is not to be regarded as an independent personal gift. The gifts to each soul are for the well-being of the whole Body of Christ.

Whatever we acquire in the City of God becomes necessarily effective. In the Heavenly City all are bound together by participating in one life.

The Voice of God speaking in the depths of our soul is the formation of the Religious Life.

It is supernatural in its origin and its development. The Voice is ever calling us on. The routine of our life may be just the same, as travellers crossing the ocean see the same circle of water day after day, yet it is not the same, for they are moving onward.

The Call is continuous and abiding. The life must be self-unfolding, the Life of God unfolding itself more and more within our souls. Never forgetting what it has called us to — living in

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watchfulness of its power, we have come to hear the Voice of God speaking in our souls.

Our call to obedience becomes intensified when we think of our relation to others. We do not know what souls may be saved by our observance of the call or what souls lost by its neglect. Our own soul may be at stake and our own end missed by our neglect. It is a deep truth that souls may be saved and yet miss the reward or end they might have attained.

There is safety in the Religious Life. It is under Divine protection. Christ Who calls, pledges Himself to our support. Obedience to Vocation is the way of safety. When our Lord calls us He pledges Himself to our support. It is like a marriage union between the soul and Himself. He knows what we are, our disposition, our character, our strength and weakness, but He takes us just as we are. He knows the restoring and re-creating power of His grace. He sees how He can re-create us in Himself. The soul need not consider its own defects or weaknesses, but should make a triumphant act of faith in His grace. He promises never to leave us, and that nothing shall pluck us out of His Hand. In every time of trial and temptation, He will be our succour and support. He will ever encourage us by His Presence and His renewed gifts of Grace. If we stumble, He will lift us up. If we fall, we shall not fall away. His All-sufficient merit will plead for us. His Holy Spirit will abundantly be given us. He will come to dwell within us, the Invincible

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Defence against all our enemies. He will give us a happy death and assurance of future felicity. Vocation is a heavenly lighted, spirit-guarded way through earth up to the Throne of God.

Examen

Have I prized and cherished my Vocation as I ought? Could a princess ever forget she was of the blood royal? Have I tried to live in obedience to its developing demands? Have I recognized that it is a progressive call, ever calling me to a closer walk with God? Have I lived in its power and thought of its eternal significance? Have I wept because it has been neglected or ignored by my human frailty? Has the Voice been an inspiring and uplifting one in my soul? Have I listened to it as the Voice of Jesus, calling me with a personal Love, ever forgiving, supporting, etc. How shall I not hereafter, with generous love, cherish and respond to it? How does He speak to me, saying with words indeed of commendation, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee," etc. (Revelation II. 4, 5.)

Prayer

O Lord, Whose mercies are ever new, Who hast called me, renew in me the power of that call. Fill me with fresh desires, with the courage of endurance, with devotion to Thy counsels, with love of union to Thy life, emptying me of myself, and filling

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me with Thyself. May I become a true and faithful Religious, obedient to my Rule and seeking perfection.

Colloquy: Acts of Love

Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Lo, here am I, send me. My life and all I have and am I give to Thee. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. My Jesus, Lord and Master, Light and Life of my soul. Jesus, blessed Redeemer, my Good Shepherd and dearest Spouse. I love Thee, I adore Thee. Give me of Thy Divine Love that with Thy Love I may love Thee as Thou shouldst be loved.

Words of Jesus: Fear not, my daughter, thou art mine, and I am thine. I will protect thee. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of Life. (Prayer in P. B. Sixth Sunday after Trinity.)

MEDITATION III

SINS

St. Peter and his Fall

THERE is so much that is attractive in blessed St. Peter. He had a warm and affectionate nature. He loved our Lord with great intensity. He seems to have been different from St. John.

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Peter loved with his affections, St. John with his will. Peter's large-hearted, warm, loving nature draws all penitents to him. As he was forgiven, so he knows how to sympathize with the fallen and to strengthen his brethren. He had been led on from one degree of discipleship to another. He was undoubtedly a very earnest follower of St. John the Baptist. He had heard him point out Jesus as the Lamb of God. With sincere devotion, he had left his nets to follow the Master. A great change took place in him at the Miracle of the Fishes. Something of the awful Divine character of our Lord came into his soul. The Messiah, Whom he took Him to be, was something more than the great promised Prophet. And in the spirit of awe before our Lord's Divine Majesty, He saw himself in a new light. A deep conviction of his sinfulness flooded his soul. "Depart from me, O Lord," he said, "for I am a sinful man." It was the perfecting of a true or second conversion. Then, enlightened by our Lord's teaching and by His rebukes, he received an illumination from the Father. His love grows and becomes more intense. It has from its very warmth a danger. He becomes over self-confident. He believes he would rather die than deny Christ. Yet it is the loving, converted, illuminated Peter, so strong in his devotion, who falls. He denies his Master. But, O wondrous mercy! our Lord looks on Peter. What was it that was conveyed in that look? That look penetrated his inmost soul. It woke depths of grief and sorrow

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such as only that nature could know. He is overwhelmed, crushed, broken-hearted at the thought of himself. How could he have done it? It seemed an impossibility. But alas! alas! for the ghastly fact! O! that look of Jesus! If it had not had love in it, Peter would, like Judas, have destroyed himself. He weeps bitterly for the love he has offended. And abased in deepest humility, he was emptied of all self-trust. He is at length restored by the Lord Whom He had wronged. Let his fall be to us a warning, and his restoration a hope.

Prayer

O Lord, Who wouldst not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, Who in Thy infinite mercy didst restore Thy servant St. Peter, who denied Thee, and didst recover Mark, Thy Evangelist, after his fall, Who didst cleanse the Magdalene from all her defilement, Who canst save to the uttermost and recall to spiritual life those who are dead in trespasses and sins, have pity upon us. Let the deep of our misery call to the greater deep of Thy mercy. Wash us in Thy Precious Blood. Take us back into Thy loving favour. Raise us from the death of sin into the life of righteousness. Give us new hearts and re-create us in Thyself, that accepted and saved in Thee, we may glorify Thee as everlasting monuments of Thy Mercy, for Thy merit's sake. Amen.

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Meditation

Sin is usually divided into two kinds: mortal and venial. Mortal, or deadly sin, is grave in character and separates the soul from God. It is consciously resistant to grace and deliberate in will. Venial sin is something of a less grave kind, and it does not separate the soul from God. It is often not deliberate, but the result of human frailty and surprise.

I am glad to think, dear Sisters, that none of you in your Religious state are guilty of mortal sin. Whatever the past may have been, God has blotted it out. But it may be profitable to consider it in Meditation as a warning safeguard.

Sin is the greatest of all evils. We want to impress this truth on our minds. It is seen to be so in its terrible, far-reaching effects. Think of the sin of the Angels. They were intelligent beings, formed in grace. They had none of the temptations of the flesh, or of an evil world, or of a fallen adversary. They had to pass through their probationary stage of trial, and by surrender of themselves to God, rise into a glorified and sinless union with Him. But self-love, or ambition, or some spiritual sin led them into disobedience. They rejected grace and fell. O how terrible was the fall! They were cast out of Heaven. They lost the blessed end they might have attained; separated from God's grace, they became devils. They were lost and eternally lost. Their leader, Lucifer, only waits the time when he

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should be cast out forever into the everlasting darkness and bottomless pit.

Think also of the sin of Adam. He was made in God's image. He had received a gift of grace. It was to enable him to attain through a peaceful passage a union with God in glory. He sinned. He lost that superadded grace. He could no longer attain that blessed union. The day he sinned, his soul, losing grace, became as dead. His body came under the natural law of physical death. His soul, apart from the original grace, became wounded. Memory and reason, understanding, all, showed its effects. A rebellion sprang up between the different portions of his nature. Alienated from God, he was cast out of his original state, and could only transmit to descendants a nature weakened by sin. Consider all the miseries and sorrows which invade humanity. What terrible effects the sins of man have wrought. What wars, fightings, hatred, crimes, evils, man has brought upon himself. The world looks like one great hospital of misery. All these evils are the effect of sin.

Sin is not only the greatest of all evils: it is an act against God Himself. It so touches His moral Nature and contradicts it that logically, if it could be so effective, it would destroy God. As one does not say a child is not guilty of patricide who raises a knife against his father's heart, although unable to accomplish his purpose, so it is with the soul in respect to God. The sinner takes God's power and turns it against Him. The soldiers,

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when they so cruelly beat our Divine Master, until His Body was covered with the winding sheet of blood, were using all the time His power against Himself. They could not have crucified Him did He not uphold them in the power to do this. The Cross reveals to us the great truth that sin is an act against God.

Again, we may well remember the danger besetting even Religious of falling away. Amongst the Apostles themselves, there is the terrible instance of the fall of Judas. Apparently he did not accept our Lord's teaching about the Holy Eucharist, for our Lord said, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" There was a secret sin, we know, of covetousness, and his pride was wounded by our Lord's rebuke of his criticism of the Magdalene's loving act. So he betrayed our Lord, and Christ said, "It were good for him if he had never been born." Think also of the fall of Peter, who fell through his self-confidence, or of Mark, who failed through want of endurance. Indeed, every large Religious Community has in its history some sad instance of a falling away. It came about through some un-exterminated secret sin, through neglect of rule, or lack of desire for perfection. It started perhaps from some sore feeling at the Superior's rebuke, sometimes from a temptation to other work. It may come from undue affection to some extern, or disloyal suggestions made by a priest. Great evil may be brought about by a false conscience, which justifies the leav-

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ing a Community. But whatever may be the causes that lead to a fall, the condition of such a Religious is a most terrible one. Better a thousand times to bear the trials in a Community, than to desert one's post and deny the life.

The more we know of God, the more we realize our ingratitude and sinfulness. In the sight of the All Perfect One, the Heavens are not clean, and He charges His Angels with folly. The increasing knowledge of His goodness and love intensifies our sorrow, but it makes us more fervently desire to be less unpleasing to Him.

"The more I know Thee, dearest Lord, the more I love Thee. The more I love Thee, the more I grieve that I have ever offended Thee; yet the more I grieve, the more I love."

As we grow in grace, the more we realize the injuries done to our nature by heredity. The grace lost by Adam left our nature a wounded one. Our reason, understanding, imagination, all were weakened. The affections became warped, the will enfeebled. A rebellion set in between the various faculties. Our bodies craved self-indulgence, our reason and will asserted their independence. Our nature became like a sleeping volcano: if quiescent, it was healed over by sorrow. The insurgent passions and unregulated desires at times asserted themselves. Our characters, strong perhaps in some one faculty and in some one direction, were almost always weak in another. Our spirit was governed by self-love, self-sufficiency, and inde-

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pendence. Vain glory and secret pride had their seat therein.

Under this head of our sinfulness, we may well contrast ourselves with the Saints, with the Blessed Martyrs, with the Holy Religious. How far are we from their sanctity. How we are still the slaves of a weakened and disordered nature. How imperfect my return of love for the Love that died for me. How far is my nature from being dead and crucified with Christ and risen new and holy in Him.

Let us examine ourselves again.

Reflect upon our faults. Here is a fruitful subject of examination. We come into Religion probably from Christian surroundings. We had made some progress in a devotional life. We went to Confession and made frequent Communions. We were surrounded by sympathizing Catholic friends. Our priest had us in much esteem. We unconsciously reflected their estimate of ourselves. So it surprised us when we came into the Novitiate that the Mistress began to point out faults in us of which no one had told us, and we had never been aware. They were faults of character, of speech, of manners. The latter related to very little things, to our rapid walking, the manner of our speaking, of a lack of courtesy. We naturally did not like this, for we had almost always been looked up to in the Religious world. But we began to see how much our interior life could be improved, and our wills, thoughts, manners, be brought under control. We

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were to grow in quietness, calmness, recollectedness of God's Presence within us, in gentleness, loving manners and spirit, tempered by the Holy Ghost. And now that we have passed out of the Novitiate, what are still our faults of character? It has been said that every one has some fault of which he is not aware. Self-deceit is so subtle. Our faults become concealed. Others may see them, but not we ourselves. It is often a fault that hinders successful work in our Community. It often hinders its harmonious working. Why is it that all Sisters cannot work together in harmony and love? How often is a Superior forced to assign work to different Sisters, because some cannot work well with others. Why should this intelligent Sister be so keen of criticism? What sore feeling has led to a party spirit? What lack of humility is it that thinks itself overlooked in the assignment of place or work? Whence comes this desire to reform the Community when we do not reform ourselves? Why this over-anxiety in some one about their health, and the care that is to be bestowed on it? Poor human nature! How weak it is! How full of evil tendencies! How we all need the grace of fortitude to fight it, the grace that St. Theresa so prized.

Turn to another matter. Review your neglects. You do not wilfully disobey your Rule, but you neglect a complete surrender to its spirit. The Rule looks to you like a high standard to be admired rather than kept. No one, you say, can keep it perfectly. And do you not neglect its strict observ-

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ance? Neglect thus holds a prominent place in the failure of our sanctification. "Take away neglect," it is said, "the neglect of grace, neglect of duty, neglect of means, neglect of precautions, and neglect of opportunities, and you remove most of the sad causes of moral deterioration." Let me invite you, dear Sisters, in this Retreat, to examine yourselves, if in any way the insinuating fault of neglect has undermined your spiritual life. The earnest soul will prove its interior loss if, through any laxity or neglect, it is found declining from its divinely taught standard.

We must all guard ourselves against the subtle snare of a neglect that may terminate in a condemned lukewarmness. See how neglect of a sharp ruling of the tongue, or neglect of mortifying self-conceit and self-opinionatedness, neglect of conquering uncharitableness and a critical tendency lead on ofttimes to fatal faults. How true it is that he who despiseth little things, little by little shall he fall. It is equally true that he that is faithful in little things, little by little shall be exalted. Like soldiers in a campaign in face of the enemy, we cannot be too strict in our discipline. A failure to take every precaution against surprise, neglect at a simple outpost, has often lost the victory and led to a defeat.

How careful, how punctiliously careful, a Religious should be in the observance of her Rule!

Another subject it is profitable to weigh well is our human frailty. God, in His tender Mercy,

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takes account of this. He knows whereof we are made. He remembers we are dust.

"There is no place where Earth's sorrows,
Are more felt than up in Heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given."

We can but expect there will be wanderings in prayer, and some incautious or unwise utterings. There is the dulness that comes from a continual routine. There is a tiresomeness arising from the monotonies of the way. There are periods when we lack devotion, even at the Blessed Sacrament. We are conscious of a lack of fervour and a dryness of devotion. Sometimes these symptoms are occasioned by physical weakness or disorder. The mind cannot always bear the tension required. It must sometimes be relaxed by profitable recreation. St. John the Apostle is recorded as fondling a dove, St. Carlo Borromeo as playing a game of chess. Dr. Neale would give to a Sister, after coming home from nursing a serious and trying case, a story to read. But recreation taken for God does not separate us from God. And dryness is different from lukewarmness. In itself it is not sin. God indeed may withdraw sensible devotion in order to strengthen our wills and increase our piety. Yet human frailty needs to be watched. It is a prolific cause of venial sins. We cannot escape them all, but we can avoid all deliberate venial sins. We must not indulge in low spirits, in emotional

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moods, in trifling with temptations to doubt, in unloving feelings towards any, in idle castle building, in gossiping about Community matters with externs, in over-ardent particular friendships, in aught that savours of electioneering, in respect either to the election of a Sister or a Superior. It is so easy to fail in any of these or like ways. It becomes us therefore to rule, not only our thoughts, but our emotions. Our hopes and joys, our sorrows and fears are to be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. We are to become like unto the seabirds sleeping on the tossing waters, our souls undisturbed, resting sweetly on the ocean of the Divine Love.

But we shall not attain that perfection which we all earnestly seek, unless, summoning all our courage and with earnest prayer, we vigorously attack our own greatest enemy, the human spirit of self-love. It is more dangerous or more subtle than our enemies the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. There it lies, like a venomous serpent, hidden and coiled up in the secret depths of our being.

It is seen in the promptings of our fallen nature. It is ease-taking, comfort-seeking, so far as the body is concerned, — self-justifying, self-opinionated as to the soul. It is self-prompted and self-loving in spirit. It is a self-deceiving spirit, making warm exalted feelings to be taken for inspirations of the Holy Spirit. It often suggests the undertaking of good works, with the idea that benevolent persons should subscribe to their support. It wants others to carry out its own devised plans. It leads

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some persons to talk much about their spiritual condition. The experience meetings held by sectarians are full of dangers. The early Church allowed of public confession of sins to the humiliation of the penitent. But telling what the Lord has done for our souls endangers our humility.

Again, the spirit of levity is a note of the human spirit. There are some ever striving to be witty, to say bright things, to ridicule persons, even to make light of holy things. They desire to startle or dazzle their companions. Then this spirit gives way to despondencies or sore feelings at rebukes. We should be thankful when any faults are pointed out. Our falling into them should not lose us our peace of mind, but should be productive of humility. Being disgusted with self is only a sign of self-love, and not repentance, but pride.

Again: as every one has many natural virtues, it is to be remembered that no one or particular virtue is a test of character. It may be the result of good breeding, or of social position; virtues may be cultivated from some one worldly end, or to cover up some ambition, love of popularity or a vice. It may be the outcome of a mere natural good nature, and so it is in religion. The human spirit may travesty virtues: it may put them on as a garment. Moreover, a naturally active disposition will be untiring in good works, an emotional one will be ever ready with a flood of tears, a melancholy one will easily spend hours in prayer. So, too, the human spirit speaks in a very excited way when critical

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reports are made concerning its conduct. It does not consider that if the accusations are not wholly true, yet some may partially be so. They always open the way to self-examination and to acts of humility. Why be so sensitive as to what others think of you? This touchiness about our reputation is only another sign of the human spirit. Our Blessed Lord's Example should be made ours. He was called a fool, a blasphemer, a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a companion of publicans and sinners, a breaker of the law, inspired by Beelzebub, yet He was silent. The human spirit exaggerates little slights, broods over little misunderstandings, is irritated at interferences with one's work, prides itself on its own better skill. How subtle, how persistent is this spirit! It lies, as we have said, like a serpent coiled up in the heart.

Examen

Out of all these points shall we not find something to arouse ourselves to fresh exertion? You belong, dear Sisters, to Christ. You are His. I do not believe any mortal sin has separated you from Him. The soul of God is not made sad by you. I would have you maintain the assurance of your acceptance and your peace, but there is no one, says the Apostle, that hath not sinned. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Retreats are times of improvement, and improvement demands a knowledge of our defects. The Religious will sincerely pray, "O Lord

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show me myself. Look well, O Lord, if there be any way of wickedness in me. Yet show me not myself apart from Thee. Let me see more fully Thy tender mercy, forgiving love. I should sink in despair, but in Thee is pardon for every and all my sins. Thou art my deliverer, my blest Redeemer, my dearest Saviour. My love draws me to Thyself. O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord seal my loving pardon with the assurance of Thy Peace.

MEDITATION IV

CHRIST, OUR MASTER

Our Lord Jesus Christ

PICTURE our Lord in His sublime and awful Majesty, sitting in final judgment on mankind. God became Incarnate that He might make, through a union with His Humanity, a newly developed Creation. It was to be free from all sorrow and sin, and from all trace of evil, beautiful in its obedient righteousness, radiant in its transporting bliss and joy. There will surely come a day, as He said, when sitting in Judgment, He will separate the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad. He will also separate His true and faithful followers from the nominal and neglectful ones. Hear His own words.

"The Son of Man shall come in His Glory, and all

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the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His Glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Then shall He say also unto them on His left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Prayer

O Lord, most Holy, most mighty, Who hast come in mercy to save, Who will come in Judgment, give us such an awe-subduing sense of that great day, that now, pierced by its terrible scrutiny, we may be aroused to a more faithful conformity to Thy counsels, and more diligent efforts in Thy service.

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Meditation

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God. He claims to have come down from Heaven. He had a preëxistent life. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He had witnessed the fall of the rebel Angels. He was not merely descended from David. He was David's Lord. He had a Glory with the Father before the world was. While visible upon earth, He was still really in Heaven. To have known Him is to have known the Father. He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him. He is one with the Father, not merely by a moral, but a natural union. Of the Father, He only has complete knowledge. He Himself is known only by the Father. He possesses all things in common with the Father; all power is His. He will not only rouse the dead, but can give Eternal Life. Before Him, all nations will be gathered to final judgment. All men are to honour Him, even as they honour the Father. We are apt so to think of Him on His human side, as almost to forget His Deity. He had wrapped human nature about His Divine Nature that He might act out His Godship through the condition of humanity. There is a danger lest by our familiarity with His Humanity, we forget He is God. It would be well to read through the Gospels and at every mention of His Name worship His Godhead. Before Him, we must put our hands on our mouth and bow our heads in the dust, and cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy." His Deity demands our absolute submission. Have

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we laid ourselves thus at His Feet, surrendering all we are or hope to be, to Him, to be in time and Eternity His loving slaves?

He is our Master. He is wisdom itself. His words are our laws of conduct. Do we not dwell perhaps too exclusively on His tenderness and compassion? We must not forget His awful, sublime, and imperious demands. There is a tender but a stern side to His character. Consider how severely He rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees. The seven great woes stand in opposition to the seven great beatitudes. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses." He rebukes the spirit of unholy avarice. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." "Woe unto you, blind guides, who say, 'Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!'" (St. Matt. 23. 15.) How terribly He condemns here casuistical morality. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees! who pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, but have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith;" condemning the absence of faith towards God, and of mercy towards one's fellows. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within are full of extortion and excess." Here Christ condemns our

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outward respectable conformity to the Gospel and lack of inward righteousness.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ye are like unto whited sepulchres, beautiful outward, but within, full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." Respectable in the sight of men, they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! building tombs of prophets, and garnishing sepulchres of the righteous. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" He passed judgment upon Jerusalem for its rejection of Him. There shall not be left, He said, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. Its destruction should be accomplished with a tribulation such as was not since the creation of the world.

After our Lord's lament over the doom of Jerusalem, He speaks of Capernaum, saying, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." He sternly warns people against the danger of losing their own soul. He said of Judas, pronouncing His Eternal loss, "It were good for that man if he had never been born." To the man who neglected to put on the wedding garment, like persons who neglect using the Sacraments of grace, He pronounces in the parable the awful judgment, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Concerning the unforgiving debtor, he was to be delivered to

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his tormentors, till he should pay all that was due from him. To the foolish Virgins, who had neglected to take sufficient oil for their lamps, and came saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," He answered, "I know you not." "The Son of Man," He declared, "shall send His Angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." He shall say in the final Judgment to them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Our Lord, for a time, bears now with the evil world. But as He came to save it, so will He come in Judgment. As there is no mercy like the Mercy of God, manifested in His Church and Sacraments, so there is no wrath like the wrath of the Lamb. We may well tremble at the thought of that awful day, when all the workers of iniquity will be forever cast out.

CHRIST'S UNCOMPROMISING DEMANDS

He bade us take up our Cross and follow Him. His religion was not a "believe as you please, and go as you please" kind. Though He said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," nevertheless it was still a yoke. Whosoever did not take up His Cross and follow Him was not worthy of Him. All other

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duties were to yield to His Service. "Let the dead," He said, "bury the dead." No matter what it might cost, even the breaking up of home ties, men were called to follow Him. "I am come," He said, "to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." He demanded inward righteousness. His demands involved no mere outward discipleship or a mere world's standard of morality. His followers were not only to believe and trust in Him as their leader and Saviour, they must be changed inwardly, thoroughly, in heart and will. They must be born again from above and become new creatures. Their whole inward life was to be changed by help of divine power. They must be converted and become as little children, otherwise they could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Many might seek, but few could enter in. Entrance could only be gained by sturdy and persistent effort. The Kingdom would suffer violence, and the violent would take it by force. He bade men to strive to enter in at the strait gate, for narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it. (St. Matt. 7. 14.) Relaxed temporary efforts will not succeed; there must be perseverance to the end. No man, having put his hand to the plough, may draw back. "Many are called, but few chosen."

While there will be a great multitude brought to

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glory, there will be vast numbers who will miss the proffered end and be lost.

Again: Concentrate your thoughts on strictness of the Rules given by Christ for conduct of life. His followers were to be separated from the world. Their lives were to bear witness by sacrifice to the temporary character of this world and our hope in the world to come. We were not to lay up, in an avaricious manner, treasures on earth, but treasures in Heaven. We were not to neglect the poor, the sick, the suffering, the Lazarus at our gate. We were to be merciful to our debtors and fellow men. We were to seek to be reconciled to any we had wronged, to forgive from our hearts, to pray for blessing upon our enemies, to keep the rules of the Church, obeying those who sat in the seats of authority. We were to discipline the body by fasting. Our Lord said, "When the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast." The appetites and passions must be kept under strict control. "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." He enjoined the duty of almsgiving. It was to be a part of our worship, not made grudgingly, not to be the mere runnings over of superfluous wealth, but that which cost us something. Our speech must be controlled. It must be simple, straightforward and true. Our "Yea" must be "Yea," and our "Nay, Nay." We were not to be quarrelsome, or to stand upon our mere rights. "If a man take thy coat, let him take thy cloak also." Our lives

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are to be like the seed that falls to the ground and dies, and through death, brings forth good fruit. Such is our Lord's teaching in the life which He enjoins. As we gaze at the All-Holy Lord, we see how He, in His own life, fulfilled His own words. He was the embodiment of His own Gospel. He was sublime in the fulfillment of His own precepts. There is an awful grandeur in His heroic fortitude and asceticism. He is wonderful in His sinless perfection. He is inflexible in His justice. No personal friendship makes Him withhold deserved rebukes. He says to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He condemns St. John with the withering rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." He exposed the casuistry of the Scribes and Pharisees, the rationalizing unbelief of the Sadducees, the feeble worldly morality of Pilate, the beastly sensuality of the fox Herod, the venomous hatred of Annas and Caiaphas. Unmoved and unflinching is His stern denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees. Holy is He in the calmness of His final judgment of the world. A day will surely come when the great separation takes place between the evil and the good, the saved and the lost, a day of division, within the Church herself, of the tares and the wheat, a day which will try the works of the righteous and burn up the wood, the hay and the stubble of their unperfected works, a day when the merely formal and careless and unconverted will find their place with the wicked and unbelievers. Knowing then that the righteous shall scarcely be

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saved, how should we not try to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Examen

How, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall we not search ourselves to see what imperfections there may still be in us? One thing is certain, we must die, and after death there is the Judgment. We hope and believe that all Religious, through the mercy and grace of God, may be saved. Only by way of loving warning do we venture to quote here the words of one giving a Retreat to Religious in another Communion. "Have you never entertained some misgivings about any Religious? Have you ever heard such remarks confidentially made about one whom death has carried off: 'What a pity Sister —— was so hard to live with!' 'What a pity Sister —— was not more pious and regular!' 'Poor Sister —— will have some account to give for all the misunderstandings she cost!' 'How regrettable that Sister —— had that unfortunate weakness!' 'Poor Sister —— showed some piety, but it was a pity she meddled with other people's concerns, and turned others against her!' 'Poor Sister —— was not bad hearted, but she had a very disagreeable temper!' Again: 'Poor Sister —— has gone. We must pray for her. There's an end now to her intrigues!' 'Poor Sister —— was certainly intellectual, but she was a great critic, and always finding fault, and seeking to reform the

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Society and others!' Shall I have any or like things said concerning myself?"

Prayer

O Lord, Righteous, Holy, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Who will not spare the guilty who now reject Thy mercy, create in me a holy fear of Thy righteous Judgment and hatred of all deliberate and venial sin. May Thy invincible Will, ruling within me, make me invincible against the wiles of Satan. Strengthened by Thy protection, may I daily seek after perfection and an increasing union with Thee by the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit!

MEDITATION V

CHRIST'S TEACHING

Prelude

BRING before you the scene of our Lord seated on the mount. In what a contrast it stands to the giving of the Law. Then the Glory of the Lord abode upon the mountain, and the cloud covered it. Then barriers were placed about Mt. Sinai lest the people should enter. Then our Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire and the cloud. There were signs of awful warning and grandeur. But here the barriers are taken away. The cloud is removed, and the fire has ceased till all can draw nigh and hear God speaking to them. "And

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Jesus opened His mouth and taught them," and His words have gone like morning over the earth. Let us rejoice with all the saints in Paradise, the Prophets, and the holy men of old, who in faith looked forward to Christ's coming. Let us try to enter into their feelings and hope and faith. In times of tribulation, in defeat and captivity, in seasons of depression, when the light of Israel was almost extinguished, they kept the Faith. He would surely come according to His gracious promises. With them let us rejoice. He has come, and we, with like faith, know He will come again. And so we listen, and also wait and watch. Let us gather up His words, and pray the Holy Ghost to write them in our hearts.

Prayer

O Lord, the True Light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and by the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit in every Christian, enlighten our hearts and minds, so that we may know and love Thee, the Truth itself, and be transformed by it.

Our Lord's Discourses

Our Lord's Sermons may be divided into those which relate to the classes:

I. The Trinity and Himself.
II. The Sacraments of the Church.
III. The Church.
IV. On the Spiritual Life.

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He revealed first the Glory of the Divine Nature as manifested in a Trinity of Being — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each being possessed of self-consciousness were not three individuals, but they were three separate Persons. Each shared in the Godhead. The Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God.

The Father uncreate, the Son one with the Father, and the Holy Ghost their Equal. Christ revealed this three-fold Being of God in the Baptismal formula of "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus we learn of the Blessedness and Joy of God's own Life. He is not a solitary Being leading a solitary life. He, Who is Love itself, has within Himself the ever-being-begotten Son, and the Personal tie of the Holy Ghost which binds the Sacred Three in unity. God is thus the most lovely and blessed and beautiful of Beings. And we love Him for His own dear Sake.

Again: Jesus Christ made Himself the subject of frequent discourses. He preached on Himself as the Life. (St. John v. 17–47.) As the Father had life in Himself, so He had given to the Son to have Life in Himself. As the Father raised up the dead and quickened them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will. "I," He said, "am the Resurrection and the Life." As the Second Adam, His bodily union with His Deity could, by other than the habitual method, propagate a new creation.

He, the last Adam, was made a quickening and life-giving Spirit. He transmits to our bodies and

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souls a life derived from His Incarnate Nature. Our bodies are to be made like unto His glorious Body, and our souls made partakers of the gift of Eternal Life.

O wondrous, blessed, and transforming gift and possible end of being!

Again: Jesus preached a discourse on Himself as the "Light of the World" (St. John vii. 12, 52), beginning, "I am the Light of the World. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of Life."

Christ was the Word, or uncreated Wisdom. As one with the Father, He did nothing by Himself. In all the works external to the Blessed Trinity, the whole three Persons coöperate. The Blessed Life that comes from God through Christ, entering into us, makes us free. We are made free from the ignorance and prepossessions of our weakened and fallen nature. We are possessed with the light of the indwelling Christ. Our Vision is enlarged to the knowledge of a Heavenly State. We are enlightened with the Divine Wisdom. We know with certainty the Gospel's glorious truths. It is a light that brightens within us as we walk by it.

Christ preached on Himself as the "Living Waters." (St. John vii.) "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water." This He spake of the Holy Ghost, which they that believed on Him should receive. He was elevated on the Holy Cross,

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where His Side was opened, and the Blood and Water flowed forth. A stream thus issued from Him, which, through the Sacraments, was to flow through the whole world. His death He declared to be the source of the new life. As Eve was taken out of the side of Adam, the Church was to be taken out of His Side. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me."

Another series of discourses related to the Sacraments as means of union with Himself. He is the "Living Water," of which all believers are to partake. He is the true "Bread from Heaven," of which to eat is Life Eternal. He is "the Vine," into which, to be living branches, we are to be engrafted.

The first great means of union with Himself is Holy Baptism. He taught this to Nicodemus. (St. John iii.) We must be "born again." We must be born from above, i.e. by the Holy Spirit. We must be washed from our sins, must have the seminal principle of a new nature given unto us. We must have the justifying grace bestowed, which can make us become what we ought to be in God's sight. We must be born out of the darkness of our natural state into the Kingdom of Light. Thus by Baptism we are transplanted into a new spiritual state. We become new men. By nature we are God's children, but by Baptism the children of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us thank God for this great and abiding gift.

Again: Our Lord gave an instruction on the Holy

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Eucharist. (St. John v, vi.) He revealed here the means of our full incorporation into His Life-giving nature. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath Eternal Life." Marvellous and wonderful gift! The elixir of the Heavenly Life, the Resurrection Food, the Divine Legacy of His dying Love, the inpouring of Christ's Nature, our identification with His Passion and its merits. It was this heavenly food that has sustained the Martyrs and Confessors, the Religious and the Saints. May we love it with an increasing devotion. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our Hope and Strength, our Peace and Joy, our Love and Delight, our Defence and Safety, our Blessed-making Spouse!

The next series of our Lord's discourses relates to the Church. Uniting His followers to Himself, Christ unites them to one another. They become a new generation, the family of Jesus Christ. So He forms His spiritual Body, the Church. It has an outward and visible form and an inward power and life. It is a city, a net, a flock, a Kingdom in its organized form. It is also a power and life. The Kingdom of God is within you. As a visible Kingdom, it has officers who represent Himself, Who, as the Prophet, Priest, and King, is its Head, and Who promised to remain with His Church till the end of the world. It has a seedlike power, and will develop its life in souls according as it is corresponded with.

Hidden beneath His parables, He prophesied the

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manner of its growth. At first, as in the early ages, it would be attacked by heretics, the enemy would "sow tares." Though small and hidden in its beginnings, it would grow. Small as a grain of mustard seed and planted in the earth, it would grow throughout Europe and finally be preached throughout the world. It would be like leaven, hidden in the three measures of meal. It would change the character of the old Roman civilization, conquer the barbarian invasions, and leaven modern thought and life. It would be in the Middle Ages like a treasure, a treasure hidden in the field, which, obscured by error and worldliness, must be sought for. In exploring and commercial pre-Reformation times, it would be like a merchant seeking goodly pearls. Finally it would be "like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Christ and His Church were thus great topics in His teaching. The Church would not conquer the world, but the Gospel would be preached to all nations. There would be a falling away in the latter days. But Christ would conquer. Out of the world there would be gathered the Church which should be Holy and undefiled, filled with joy and bliss, and as the Bride of Christ, last forever. For this end Christ died. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. O may we love it as He loved and loves it. May we love and work for it. Give ourselves to it, and if need be, die for its sake.

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Christ's Moral Discourses are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount, in His parables, and in His denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees. He warns them of the world's rejection of Himself. He pronounces the woes that will overtake the ungodly, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last Judgment. Especially are they to be found in the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Fool, the Wedding Garment, and the Ten Virgins. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes, which are like an overture to the whole discourse. In it, as having the Holy City, with the Temple and its Sacrifices before His Mind, Christ begins by saying, "Ye are a city set on a hill." Referring to the salt used in the Sacrifices, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Like unto the Holy City, "Ye are the light of the world." You have a missionary work to do. Let your light shine. Lay the foundation of your spiritual life in undoing any wrong done to another. Be reconciled to God. Reconcile yourself to him you have injured.

As in the Temple there was an Altar, so in the Christian Dispensation there is to be one. "If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Next the heart must be pure, even if it costs fearful discipline, like the cutting off of the hand, or the plucking out of the eye. Your conversation must not be interspersed with violent expressions,

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or oaths, but be true, simple, and straightforward. "Let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay." You are not to be vindictive or stand upon your technical rights, but act courteously, even to those who wrong you. Go farther than courtesy. You must love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, etc.

In practical matters, you must discipline the body, keep the soul, and rule the spirit. The body must be brought under discipline by fasting. Our natural covetousness must be mortified by almsgiving, the spirit must be trained in obedience to God by prayer. Let your good deeds be hidden. Be cheerful in the midst of disciplinary trial. Be not avaricious, lay up your treasure in Heaven. Trust God. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His Glory, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be single-minded. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Judge not others, but judge thyself. Ask, and it shall be given you. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Seek, and ye shall find. Beware of self-made prophets. Let not your religion be one of word and profession only. Seek perfection. Be earnest, be real. Build on the Rock that is Christ. He is our sure foundation. His promises will never fail. You may tremble at times on the Rock, but the Rock will stand steadfast and immovable. The storm without and the doubt within may come, but He will not fail you. Our Lord's teaching is full of the most solemn warnings which we will do well to heed. May our Lord's words be written, dear

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Sisters, by the Holy Spirit in your hearts. Love them, cling to them, make them the rule of your life. Let your governing principle be Jesus only! Jesus always! All for Jesus!

EXAMEN

Have I kept the high standard in mind given by the life of Christ? Have I applied Christ's precepts to my own life? Have I conquered any one defect in my temper, in my conversation? Have I ruled my interior life conformably to Christ's words? What defects have I noted in myself which might be corrected? Have Christ's words been to me better than riches and great spoil? Have I found a joy in keeping them? Have I sat at His Feet like Mary? Have I, like the Blessed Mother, kept all these sayings and pondered them in my heart?

MEDITATION VI

CHRIST THE VICTOR OVER TEMPTATIONS

FIX your mind on Christ in the Wilderness. The first Adam was cast out of Paradise. The second Adam came to identify Himself in His outcast position. Consequently as the first Adam was born in a garden, the second was born in an outcast stable cave. The first underwent His trial in the Garden, the second had His first in the Wilderness. The first Adam was tempted

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when full of bodily strength, the second when reduced to weakness after forty days' fast. Each was assaulted by the temptations of the Evil One. To our Lord, He came probably disguised as an Angel of Light, or as a Prophet. He began sympathizing with Him, bidding Him in virtue of His Messianic powers turn the stones into bread. A life and mission so valuable as His must not perish. Act on the inherent powers He must possess, and work this miracle. But our Lord had been led into the Wilderness by the Holy Spirit Whom He was to trust. It was not by earthly food alone the body was to be sustained. Man lives by the Word of God. Placed on the pinnacle of the Temple, Satan then bids our Lord descend. If God can sustain Him without food, He can sustain Him as He descends to the people. Let Him act in fulfillment of Daniel's great prophecy. Let Him come down before the worshipping multitudes, and He will receive their homage and be welcomed as from on high. But as it was not ordained that He was so to come, it would be tempting God to act in this manner. When Satan is thus rebuked, as beaten and surrendering, he proposes to give up his Kingdom to Christ. "Why," he says in effect, "take the way of the Cross; gain your object by receiving the kingdom of the world from me. By that act acknowledge my power and right, and then I will resign it to you." Thus Satan disclosed himself. And our Lord said, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,

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and Him only shalt thou serve." Thus in His weakness, our Lord conquered Satan, and Angels came and ministered unto Him.

Address

In considering our Lord's temptation, we are met with a theological difficulty. How is it possible that He Who was Almighty God should be subject to a real temptation? And if not capable of being tempted, how can He be an Example to us? Now the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Prayer Book is clear. We read in Hebrews that Christ "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." In our Litany we pray for deliverance, by Christ's baptism, fasting, and temptation. His temptation thus must have been a real one, and part of His great redemptive action. But how could it be that, while absolutely sinless, He should feel the strain involved in rejecting a temptation without which a real temptation could not be said to exist? There are two ways in which this was possible.

I. Christ, in redeeming mankind, was to be true to the way ordained. He did not come like some earthly Reformer, having a plan of His own for the benefit of mankind. Nor did He come groping His way to it, as it opened before Him. The great scheme of man's redemption and deliverance was laid down for Him. It came out of the depths of the Godhead. It was revealed by the old law, in the Holy Scripture by the Prophets. Every feast day, every sacrifice, the daily offering, the Day of

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Atonement bespoke Himself. All the details of His Passion were set forth, from His coming into Jerusalem till "It is finished." He said, He shall come "binding the foal unto the Vine, and His ass's colt unto the choice vine; He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes."

"Rejoice," says Zachariah, "behold thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." He shall be plotted against and sought to be entangled in His talk, as it is written. "Without cause have they hid from me their net in a pit which they have digged for my soul." He should be compassed about with words of hatred. He should be betrayed for money. "They weighed for my price twenty pieces of silver." His garments were to be made bloody by their flagellation. "Thy garments were like Him that treadeth the wine-fat." He was forsaken by the disciples. "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." He will be unjustly condemned. "False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things I knew not." He should be silent before His accusers. "Oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." He is grossly insulted. "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Judas' money was to buy a potter's field. "Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was priced at of them." He is brought before Herod and Pilate.

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"The kings of the earth stood up, the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed." Most terribly was He scourged. "I gave my back to the smiters, they ploughed upon my back and made long furrows." He is despised and rejected of men. "Not this man, but Barabbas." He was delivered up by Pilate. "He was taken from prison and from judgment. He was cut off from the land of the living." He refuses the stupefying potion. "They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink." At his emaciated figure they were astonished. "They stand gazing upon me." "Busy mockers gnashed upon me with their teeth." They drove the sharp nails into His Blessed Body. "They pierced my hands and my feet." "I may tell all my bones, they stand staring and looking upon me." He was taunted and bidden to come down from the Cross. "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. Let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him." He redeemed mankind. "He poured out His soul unto death, and His soul was an offering for sin." He was crucified between two thieves. He was numbered among the transgressors. The sun is darkened. Just as a star appeared at His birth, so the sun veiled its face at His death. "It shall come to pass in those days, saith the Lord, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, I will darken the earth in the clear day." (Amos.) He shall be afflicted with agonizing thirst. "I am weary with crying, my throat is dry, my sight faileth me for

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waiting so long upon God." "When I thirsted they gave me vinegar to drink." The soldier shall break the legs of the thieves, but "not a bone of Him shall be broken." He will finish His work. "His soul shall be made an offering for sin." These prophecies our Lord obeyed. "It is therefore," He would often say, "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."

From childhood up, He had ever before Him the Father's will and the Father's business. His Rule was, "Lo I come to do Thy Will." This involved a perpetual trial. We see it brought out in the garden of Gethsemane. Then as the Representative Penitent of the human race, he accepts the awful penalty due to sin. No thought of ours can reach the terrors of that agony. How it tried His human nature to its very depths. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless," as Victor over the temptation, He says, "Not my will but Thine be done." Another source of temptation lay in His duty to be true to the human nature He had assumed. He came as the Second Adam, identifying Himself with us as outside of Paradise to fight over again our lost battle, and bring man back through the guarded gates to the presence of and Communion with God and to His final elevation in Glory.

God had made man. Man had failed to render the obedience due and to attain to Eternal Life. He was consequently shut out of Paradise. God then makes the race over.

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Christ identifies Himself with man as so cast out. He is born in a stable. He formally receives baptism, which was for repentance, from the hands of John the Baptist. In the weakened condition of His Body after His long fast, He meets Satan in the wilderness. Why did He not respond to Satan's suggestion to turn the stones into bread? Why not? Because He was, as man, to fight out man's lost battle. He might work miracles providing food for the famishing multitudes, but He must not use His Divine power to sustain His own human nature. God had created man an intelligent being endowed with free will, who by choice should be perfectly obedient to Him. Christ fulfilled the Divine design. In Him the created purpose found its accomplishment.

O Loving wisdom of our God
When all was sin and shame
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail.

II. His being true to His human nature presented a continued temptation. As a babe, He must be true to the law of infancy. No danger threatening His dear Mother must lead Him to break His silence. Coming not in Kingly state, or endowed with wealth, He must labour for His and her support.

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For thirty years, He must remain in obscurity, perhaps exposed to the tongues of His fellow townsmen. He must leave at the appointed time His Blessed Mother and go out on His great Mission. He had no place to lay His Head. He suffered from fatigue and hunger — became an outcast on the earth. It was a great trial to His human affections. He was obliged to leave His Blessed Mother to the Providence of Almighty God. His loving Human Heart was tried by the opposition He met from the men He came to save. They misrepresented His words. They accused Him of breaking the Mosaic law. He was a Sabbath breaker, a gluttonous man, a winebibber, friend of publicans and sinners. They sought to entangle Him in His talk, and plotted the destruction of His Life. He loved Jerusalem, and when He thought of its ingratitude and blindness of heart, He wept over it. God ordained a trial also for His Soul. If anything He might lawfully desire to know, it would be when the end and final triumphant day would come. He might have known at any time by looking into His Divine Nature with which He was hypostatically united. But concerning that day, He was to restrain His natural curiosity. "Of that day and that hour," He said, "knoweth no man, not even the Son of man." Not less a trial was His solitariness. No one could enter into His Life to sympathize with Him. In one sense He was companionless. Also before Him was the knowledge of His Cross, and His human nature suffered all the agonies of a long apprehen-

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sion. His moral nature was also to be severely tried. He knew who He was and what was due to Him as God. He might lay aside His glory, but could not lay aside His Divinity and the honour due to it. When He was mocked, struck, spitted on, blind-folded, hustled about the room, taunted, lied against, He felt it all and felt it acutely. Righteous indignation is only a manifestation of the Justice of God. But He suppressed this rightful and natural feeling, and in His meekness "as a Lamb before her shearers, is dumb." Moreover His spiritual nature undergoes a terrible and awful trial. From the moment of His birth, His human nature had enjoyed, by union with His divine nature, the Beatific Vision. What was it that took place in those darkened moments when in bitterest desolation He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

To dwell for a little upon the severity of His scourging. The whole band of the soldiers gathered to inflict this terrible punishment. They had been baffled, indeed overcome, by our Lord's words at the time of the arrest. At the declaration of Himself, "I am He," they had gone back and fallen on the ground. Doubtless they attributed it to magic, but now He was in their power. Now they would make Him feel, now make Him cry out as, conquered, for mercy. So they stripped His Blessed Body and bound Him to the pillars. They took the cords, armed with points, to do their cruel work. Strong and vindictive, they lashed His Blessed Body.

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How terrible was the pain! They continued, determined to make Him cry out for mercy, until that Blessed Body was covered with a winding sheet of blood. He endured, conquering the pain by a marvellous calmness. The soldiers' arms fell weary at their sides. He had uttered no cry. He was the Conqueror over pain and its trial. It is a terrible temptation and a wonderful victory.

So when we approach the thought of His Crucifixion, what a spectacle! There He hangs, nailed, with pierced hands and feet. His Body is racked in every part. There is no whole part in it. Body, head, eyes, mouth, face, shoulders, arms, hands, feet, — pierced and strained, every nerve a source of pain, every moment a new agony. It goes on hour after hour, and there He hangs. His Virgin-Born Body, excessively sensitive, suffering untold agonies. Think sometimes of any pain we have endured and multiply it one hundred fold.

But within were His greatest agonies. We cannot measure that mental suffering. Evil seems to have triumphed. Man has turned against His God. He came to save them, and they put Him to death. It is the terrible attempted sin of Deicide, and not men only, but evil, has assaulted Him. Invisible legions of evil spirits hover around, and perhaps help to create the darkness. "Why suffer," they say, "for a world that hath despised Thee?" "What has come of all thy teaching and compassionate miracles?" Hear their vile taunts, reproaches and blasphemies. "Thou art in the grasp of the king-

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dom of darkness, and Thy work will fail." Hear His answer. "I lay down my life for them." The evil spirit continues his tauntings. "Yes! but they will reject and despise Thee." But the answer. "God commendeth His love for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." From the Divine Heart is the answer. "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

We must try, however imperfectly it may be, to realize the awful pains of Body and Soul that affected our Lord and then to remember that He, if He called upon His Divine power, could at any moment have dismissed the pain. Bring it home to your own case. Have you ever been in suffering? Have you ever had to endure any pain? Suppose you had the power, by a single wish, to deliver yourself from it, would you have done so? All our Lord had to do was to wish for relief, and He might have hung on the Cross free from pain. Herein was the great temptation, the temptation that had beset Him all through life. He must not call upon His Divine power to help Him out in the struggle, to deprive Him of bodily and mental pain. What was it that enabled Him to endure it? It was Love, Love, Love. Love triumphing over pain, anguish, suffering, neglect. Had our Lord given way at any time during His Life or one moment yielded to temptation when suffering His terrible agonizing, excruciating death, the work of redemption would have been undone. Christ would have failed in absolute continued obedience. We should have been lost

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eternally. O, as you kneel before Him, say in your heart, "He died for me, He loved me and gave Himself for me." Well may we sing, when we reflect on His countless victories over temptations, "Crown Him with many crowns!"

Examen

The Virtues exercised and developed in Christ through His temptations He transmits to us. Do we wish to be like Him? We are not merely to follow His Example, as a copyist endeavours to reproduce some great original painting. Christ communicates His own life and His virtues to us. Go then to the Blessed Sacrament, and ask that the virtue manifested at any time in our Lord's Soul may pass into you. Make a Litany in this form: "Meekness of Christ, make me meek. Patience of Christ, make me patient. Fortitude of Christ, make me enduring. Unselfishness of Christ, make me unselfish. Prayerfulness of Christ, make me prayerful. Compassion of Christ, make me compassionate. Love of Christ, make me all-loving." Thus shall we become extensions of the Lord's own life. So will the whole Church, finally, as the Bride of Christ, be like her Lord.

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MEDITATION VII

THE WAY TO CALVARY

The Way of the Cross

PICTURE our Lord on the way to Jerusalem. It is His last journey thither. He is a little in advance of the Apostles. He went before them on the way, and as they followed, they were afraid. There was something in His determined attitude which appalled them. Why does He quicken His steps? Why so in earnest? It was because it was His last journey to Jerusalem. It was because He was drawing nigh to the great act, the consummation of His Life. It was in vision vividly before Him. Does He shrink from it? No, He rather hastens to it. All the great desire of His Life is summed up in it. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

With like eagerness, zeal, and fortitude, let us take up our Cross, and let us follow in His footsteps. As our lives are consecrated to Him, let us rejoice that we may lay them down for His sake. Not the sharp deaths of the martyrs are ours, but the long and living death of a life wholly consecrated to His Service. Some of us are drawing near to our end. Let us gird our loins and press forward. Let us forget the things that are behind, and press toward the mark of our calling. Let Jesus be our watchword, Jesus our strength and pattern.

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The Way to Calvary

Christ had offered Himself voluntarily in the Upper Chamber. He then went forth. He enters into the Garden. In the Garden the first man had sinned; there, for man, He would make an act of penitence. Every action of His is now full of meaning. In the arrangement of the two groups, we see symbolized the Jewish and the Christian characters. He bids them watch and pray. They are to be united with Himself in His great penitential act.

What is to be especially noted is His great calmness and control. He enters into His Passion by an act of His own will, and He terminates it when it is finished. This wonderful deliberation and control show He was not overcome by any fear, but it was something undergone by His own will. As the Representative Penitent of Mankind, He brings before us a vision of the sins of the whole world. He wraps them about Himself like a dress taken from some loathsome leper. He realizes, as no one else can, their iniquity, vileness, and the injury offered the Father's Glory, the insult done to His Divine Love. It is an awful and ghastly sight. But He takes them upon Himself, as if all these sins were His own. Representing humanity, He is the sinner. He for Mankind is the Penitent. The struggle is seen in His prayers. But He submits to the Divine Will, and then rises in conformity with it. "Not my will, but Thine, be done." We see in this tremendous supernatural action the terrible nature of sin.

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And if we would learn what true repentance is, we must kneel beside Him Whose tears were tears of Blood.

Prayer

O Blessed Lord, Who as our Representative didst take upon Thee our sins, gather our imperfect sorrow into union with Thy Penitence that we, being broken-hearted, and submitting ourselves to the discipline of Thy Will, may find acceptance through Thy Merits and in Thy Love.

The Accusation

The band sent forth by the High Priest, and led by Judas, approaches. Judas comes to betray His Master. Christ makes His last effort to save His Apostle. He has sought to do it all through His Ministry. He gave Judas a warning Himself when he did not receive His teaching of the Real Presence. He warned Him again at the Last Supper. He speaks to Him now in words of Love, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" The words reveal to Judas that Christ knew of His promised plan of betrayal. "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Calling him by his own name it revealed to Judas the love that would even then forgive him, if he would but ask for it. Then our Lord, having revealed His awful power by the word, "I am He," which overcame the soldiers, voluntarily surrenders Himself, saying, "This is your hour and the hour of darkness." So He is brought

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before the High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas. They are the representatives of the corrupt Church. They were like the fallen Angels and representatives of Satan.

Spiritual sins, more deadly than sensual ones, have caused their blindness. They are Satan's instruments. They meet our Lord with Satan's favourite weapons of lying and unbelief. In answer to their demand, our Lord makes the solemn claim that He is the Son of Man, as Daniel prophesied. He declares He will come again with power. So, alas, the same has happened in the Church! And so the worldly-minded Church has persecuted and condemned the truth.

Prayer

O Lord, Who hast revealed the sins of those in high places in thy Church, Who through the subtlety of Satan have betrayed the purity of the Gospel truth by subtraction or addition thereto, grant us grace to keep the Faith once delivered pure and undefiled.

Christ is Brought before Pilate and Herod

Pilate is the representative of the World, Herod that of the Flesh. Herod was superstitious and cruel, for cruelty is an outcome of sensuality. He was the murderer of John the Baptist. His carnal heart desired to see miracles wrought by Jesus. He is baffled and chagrined by our Lord's silence —

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Christ will not even speak to him. As the priests resorted to Satan's weapon of lies, so the Flesh resorts to its weapon of ridicule. Herod and his men of war set Christ at nought. They array Him in the garb of a pretender. They call Him a fool. It is the same weapon with which the carnal mind assaults Christianity to-day.

Christ is brought before Pilate. The charges that are made against Him are that He perverts the nation. He is undermining loyalty to Cæsar by giving Himself the title of King. Awed by Christ's silence, Pilate seeks a private interview. Is this mysterious Person really a King? In response to a judicial inquiry, Christ replies, "Thou sayest that I am, a King." Pilate, conscious of Christ's innocence, endeavours again and again to free Him. Overborne by the fierce cries and threats, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," Pilate, fearing for his place, cowardly submits. He condemns Christ against his own conscience.

Prayer

O Lord, deliver us from the temptation of sensuality and fear of the world's judgments. May we, living in the world, be not of it, and not have its mark on our foreheads, to think as it thinks, nor on our hands, to obey its behests.

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Consider next the

ECCE HOMO

OR, THE GREAT REJECTION

Pilate had delivered Jesus. As the High Priest took refuge in lies and Herod in ridicule, the World's Representative resorts to force. The soldiers were determined that He should cry out for mercy to them. We have before referred to the dreadful flagellation. After it, they had put upon Him a royal robe, a reed in His hand for a sceptre, and pressed a crown of thorns upon His Sacred Head. They knelt before Him jeering in mockery. They strike His Holy Head with the reed. They spit in His Face. But all their vileness and vengeance and coarseness do not move Him. But now behold Him brought forth before the people. It is a dreadful spectacle; bloody and vilified He is presented by Pilate. But who is it stands beside Him? It is Barabbas the murderer. It is a great parable, Which will you choose? The cry goes up, "Not this man, but Barabbas." It is the choice the world is ever making. Barabbas is a leader of the people. He stands in their judgment for liberty and emancipation. He stands for progress and promised plenty. It is a progress based on organization of power. It is a progress made for man's material benefit. It is this kind of progress that intoxicates the world, and the world is ever shouting out, "Not this man, but Barabbas." But Jesus Christ is true progress. He is progress itself, for in and through Him we are led into the Golden City and Eternal Life.

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Prayer

O Lord, Who hast given us the power of choice, may we not choose any side because it is popular, nor follow any earthly leader, nor call any man Master on earth. May we not by neglect or indifference or misbelief take part against Thee. May we trust Thy way as the true way to help humanity and the only one which will bring a blessing on mankind.

In contrast with the great Rejection consider

The Great Acceptance

Christ is condemned to death. The Cross is brought forth. At the sight of it, the Heart of Jesus rejoices. It is the instrument of man's redemption. It is laid upon His shoulders. It is large and heavy. Love takes it up, obedience bears it as His own. But bodily weakened and exhausted, at last He staggers and falls. His enemies, fearing He may die before the Crucifixion, compel one to assist. Simon of Cyrene has come to worship at Jerusalem. His humble faith meets with an unlooked-for reward. He is made to be a companion of Jesus. He bears the Cross after Him willingly.

A great company of people, and women who bewailed and lamented Him, had followed the Lord. Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." It was Christ's Passion Sermon. He prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. Speak-

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ing for all time, He declares there is a coming Judgment which awaits a guilty world. The tears of His followers were those of compassion. But there was a deeper reason, for their own sins had caused this tragedy. Nor is it by a few tears shed in compassion or through emotion that you will wash away your guilt. Repent, take up thy Cross that thy following may be a real union with Myself. Behold Simon, and be like him, a true follower of Jesus Christ. Take up thy Cross daily and follow Me.

Prayer

O Lord, Who hadst compassion on the women who lamented Thee, warning them of their coming doom, give us the spirit of holy fear of Thy righteous judgments. May we shed tears, not only of compassion for Thy sufferings, but tears of penitence. Let our union with Thee be not a mere emotional feeling, but of active service. May we, like Simon, willingly share in bearing the Cross. May our conversion be deep, real, and true. May it become a joy, dear Jesus, to serve Thee, and make any sacrifices for Thy Sake.

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MEDITATION VIII

THE CROSS

Christ Arrives at Calvary

HE rejects the stupefying potion offered to Him to deaden the pain. Stretched on the Cross the nails are driven through His tender Hands and Feet. As the Cross is raised and placed in its earthen socket, the jolt sends an agony into every part of His Body. He is filled with excruciating pains. But amidst the curses and blasphemies of the malefactors, and the scorn and taunts of the priests, a word proceeds from His lips which is for the salvation of mankind. "Father, forgive them." It is the prevailing utterance of His Priestly Office. The pardon man's nature needs is received in Christ. A reparation for sin is made to God. The barrier which had hindered the full action of God's Love to His Creatures is now rolled away. Humanity in man's person had done penance for man's sins and obtained God's forgiveness. Here, to the Cross, let the weak, the sinful, the back-sliding, the broken-hearted come. Here is full forgiveness and reconciliation to God.

Again: Christ is the King reigning on the tree. Beside Him are two malefactors. The solemn and awful prayer of Jesus goes to the heart of one; the panorama of his life sweeps before him. He sees the shameful deeds and ghastly sins. Conviction of sin becomes his. He openly confesses his guilt.

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He accepts his terrible punishment as rightly his due. The strange title over Jesus tells that He is a King. An incipient faith arises in his soul. Whatever scorn it may bring to himself, he openly confesses Christ, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." In deep humility, he only asks for a remembrance. He beholds Christ dying, and dead, yet his faith wavers not. He clings to His Lord's promise to find it true. O wondrous conversion; so rare, so deep, so marvellous in its penitence and its faith.

Again: Behold Christ as the Prophet. At the foot of the Cross stand St. John and the Blessed Mother and the Holy Women.

Christ not only saves sinners, but unites them in one body by union with Himself. He says to St. John, "Behold thy Mother," and to His Blessed Mother, "Behold thy Son." They were to be united in love, in the love that came from Him. It was to be a tie formed by Divine Grace. Behold the Blessed Mother, not fainting, but calmly standing at the Cross. She is one in heart with her Divine Son. The sword of sorrow pierces her heart. Nevertheless she is sustained in Him. Apostles may flee, the darkness may deepen, but she, a type of the Church's faithful ones, meeting her sufferings, with Him abides.

"O Wondrous, Divine mystery of Love! Love must respond to love. As Christ gave Himself to thee, thou must give back thyself to Him."

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Prayer

O Lord, our Prophet, Priest, and King, lifted up for our redemption, Thou hast been made the Sin-Victim for us. Thou art the Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world. Pardon our sins, and cleanse us from their guilt. Unite us to Thee, and to one another in Thee, in Thy Holy Church. Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into thy Kingdom, for Thy mercies' sake. Amen.

The tragic drama of Calvary is divided into two parts. In the first we have Christ as our Priest, King, and Prophet. Then there is a pause. A great darkness gathers about the Sufferer, the sun veils His face. Christ is now presented as the God-Man or Mediator.

Christ Appealing to the Eternal Father

We hear our Lord saying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Thus He begins the recitation of the 22nd Psalm. Christ, in His Agony, thus looks on to the fruit of His work, when the ends of the world shall come together, and His seed shall serve Him. However terrible His suffering, there is to be an eventual triumph. God is a covenant-keeping God. There is a rainbow round about the Throne. God entered a Covenant with Christ. It was kept on Christ's part. All His works were good and done in grace. They were therefore meritorious by virtue of the Covenant. His Divine

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Person gave them an infinite value. They satisfied, therefore, for the sins of all mankind. We can now approach God in Jesus Christ as accepted for His merits. Here again on the Cross we have the manhood of the Mediator brought before us. It is declared in His next word, — "I thirst." Calvary is the manifestation of the Love of God, and of His Sacred Humanity. His heart thrills with all tenderness. He, Who rejected the stupefying gall, accepted then from some disciple the vinegar placed in the reed. He allowed Himself thus to be ministered to in His sufferings. Blessed was he who thus slaked the Agony of his dying Lord. That cry of His, "I thirst," comes down to us through the ages. It is a perpetual and living cry of Christ to His followers. O souls that love Him, learn more and more to serve Him. Satisfy His thirst. Work for His interests, for the extension of His Kingdom, for the saving of souls.

Prayer

O Holy Lord Jesus Christ, we prostrate ourselves before Thee. With awe and trembling we contemplate the mystery of Thy dereliction. May Thy vicarious sufferings be our deliverance, Thy victorious Faith be our own. Give us a ghostly realization of this awful mystery, and a trust in Thy merits. May we ever cling to Thee, our Covenant-keeping God, the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

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In conclusion, hear our Lord's last words, "It is finished." There is the joy of completion in any work. There is a special joy if the work has been a painful one. There is a still greater joy of an accomplished victory when the work has involved a deadly struggle. Our Lord's lifework had involved continuous trial and temptations. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He passed through the trial which afflicted His Body. His moral nature felt the indignities offered to His Person. He underwent the desolation of spirit on the Cross. He drank the bitter cup to its dregs. How great a joy now fills the heart of Jesus. God and man are reconciled. The foundation of the new Heaven and earth are laid. He commends His soul to the Eternal Father. "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." What a contrast between a Christian and a sinner's death! The sinner does not like to look forward to it in life, nor to look back on his life in the hour of death. He dies perhaps without fear, but dies like an animal. The Christian offers his pain to Jesus. The past does not trouble him, for he has been absolved from his sin. He looks forward with humility, but trust. Death has been transformed from a punishment into a gate of life. He knows dear ones who have gone before are waiting for him. The good angels come at God's command to bear his soul to Christ. He can leave those who remain trustingly to God's protection. He has learned the Divine Lesson, how to rest in God and commend His soul to Him.

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We come now to the New Covenant. When the soldiers came to Jesus, they found that He was dead already. But one of the soldiers with his spear pierced the Side, and forthwith there came out Blood and Water. This indignity offered to Christ adds nothing to His atoning work. It was finished. But we are now in the presence of another and great mystery. Why did the Blood and the Water flow out? It is the Blood of the New Covenant.

Man needed for His salvation four things. He needed truth. Before Christ came, the future was all uncertain. God might have sent angels to teach us. But their teaching could not have been effective because they could not have embodied it in example. Man was to be taught by man. But if a human example were needed, God might have taken human nature on Himself, as the first man's nature was taken. God might have taken on a true humanity from the dust of the earth. But man needed something more than example. He was stained and ruined by sin. He had offended God and needed to be reconciled to Him. It was not an Example only, but pardon, which He must obtain. It was necessary therefore that God should not only take upon Himself a nature like our own, but by entering into the race become one of us. He must become one of us in order for man to fight over again his lost battle and obtain, by his perfect obedience, our forgiveness. And so it is that He offers Himself on the Cross for mankind. But if thus He had completed His work, then the Divinity would

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have laid His humanity aside. The glorious fact, is however, that He wears it now, and will do so throughout all Eternity. Why is this? Because man needed not only redemption but restoration. He needed to be remade, reconstructed. He needed to obtain a supernatural union with God in Glory, to be made one with the God-Man Jesus Christ. As the soul of Jesus Christ had enjoyed the Beatific Vision, man, in union with Him, could obtain that end. Thereby it was that the side is pierced and the Blood and Water flow out. For just as He was taken from the side of the first Adam, so the Church, the Bride of Christ, is to be taken out of the second Adam. He extends the life of Christ to us through Christian Baptism, and through the Holy Eucharist.

O what joy and gratitude, what love should be ours, who are now being transformed through the indwelling of Christ. It is the beginning here, through Grace, of the supernatural union with Christ in Glory. A great crowd of witnesses surround us. They look down from the Heavenly Mansions. They watch with eagerness our running for the prize. Their prayers and intercessions are on our behalf. Once they were struggling like ourselves. They had their own infirmities and failures and sins. O Saints of God, reigning in Glory, we ask how was it that ye won your crowns? O blessed answer that comes floating down from the Eternal Gates: Grace, grace, grace, did it all!

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Prayer

O Lord, Who, as the second Adam, didst form Thy Church out of Thy Side, grant that we may be made one by Thy gift of Grace and a living Faith, and may be united to Thee in charity, and to one another in the bond of Thy Holy Church.

MEDITATION IX

ASPECTS OF THE CROSS

Prelude

THE Cross is the central point of the Revelation of God to a fallen world. It was shadowed forth by types and prophecy in the Old Testament. It was seen in Isaac bearing the wood up the hill; in the rod of Aaron which became a serpent and swallowed up the rods of the musicians: in the Paschal Lamb, thrust upon two spits at right angles; in the tree which sweetened the bitter water of Marah; in the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Prophecy after prophecy declared and set forth the incidents of the Passion. In the Holy Gospels, large portions of each are devoted to the ending of our Lord's Life. "Christ and Him crucified" was the burden of the Apostles' teaching.

It has been ever the strength and delight of the Saints. O mighty work of Love.

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"Death died when life died upon the wood. Blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh. It has been their hopeful prayer by the sign of the Holy Cross. Deliver us from our enemies, O Lord, O our God. They rejoiced in it in their hymns of praise."

Faithful Cross! Above all other,
One and only noble tree!
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peer may be.
Sweetest wood, and sweetest iron,
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

Bend thy boughs, O tree of glory!
Thy relaxing sinews bend.
For awhile the ancient rigor
That thy birth bestowed, suspend,
And the King of Heavenly Beauty
On thy bosom gently tend.

Prayer

O God, Who in the wonderful life-giving Cross didst open the way to Everlasting life, grant that we, united to it by faith and love, may attain to the glory which Thou hast merited for us.

I. The Cross Manifests the Love of God

We may contemplate the Being of God, wonderful in His Almightiness, His Infinity, His Eternity. Or we may review His moral attributes, His wisdom, sanctity, goodness. But what we most desire to know is His attitude towards us. We are sur-

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rounded by a world in which evil abounds, where wickedness in high places reigns, where sorrow, sickness, pain, death, are everywhere present, where the air seems heavy with the complaints of the children of men, where at times the heart sinks down oppressed by the sad spectacle. Faith enfeebled asks, "Is there a God? Does He not care? Will He leave the world to perish?" and an answer comes from the Cross, "God is Love." Man's miseries are to have an end. There is a remedy for all this present evil. God, foreseeing it from all Eternity, has provided one. He saw the sinfulness of His creature, and the miseries it would bring upon him. Yet while we were sinners He loved us. The Cross is the Revelation of that mighty Love.

II. The Cross is the Measure of Sin as an Evil

It teaches this in three ways. All men carry within them a moral law. Every violation of it brings an injury upon themselves. It is the greatest of all evils because it is an internal evil. It shows itself in an enervated and degenerated humanity, but its vicious malignity was made manifest on the Cross. The Cross was the climax of human sin. There we see the outcome of all sins. In that terrible tragedy we behold envy in the Pharisees, hypocrisy in the High Priests, sensuality in Herod, worldliness and moral cowardice in Pilate, avarice

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in Judas, fanatical hatred in the populace, cruelty in the soldiers, lying in the false witnesses, blasphemy and calumny in the accusers, weakness and instability in the Apostles. Sin culminated in the Crucifixion of Christ. We see the malignity of any sin by viewing its manifestations at Calvary.

Here, too, the worst effect of sin is revealed. We learn its character in the fall of the Angels, and in the result of Adam's transgression. But its most terrible effect is seen in the separation of the soul from God. Death is the outward symbol of that loss. It is brought home to us by the mysterious and terrible cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Moreover it is an act in conflict with the moral nature of God. It is an outrage upon His Perfection. It is the wounding of One we are most bound to love. It is an outrage upon the Divine Goodness in preferring something vile, to God. It despises the wisdom of God, in breaking the law of God. It abuses the long-suffering of God. It prostitutes the power of God, employing the strength which He gives us, against Himself. It outrages the sanctity of God, as when the Sacred form of Jesus was exposed to taunt and ridicule. Calvary thus illustrates the outrages which sin perpetrated upon God Himself.

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III. The Cross is the Revelation of All Virtues

Man needs not only merely noble precepts, but an inspiring example. To be effective the precepts must be embodied in a life. The Cross is the summary of our great Exemplar. There He displays in a conspicuous degree all virtue. There, too, shine forth those special virtues which only a dying Love could show. On other occasions we behold Christ manifesting manifold virtues. We see His compassion in feeding the multitude, but no fortitude is requisite. We behold His humility in washing the Disciples' feet, but no perseverance is an accompaniment. You notice thoughtful kindness at the marriage feast, but it does not involve meekness. But the Cross sums up all virtues. I see upon the Cross humility and obedience: "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Patience is there: "He suffered for us." Meekness is there: "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." Resignation is there: "Not my will but thine be done." Natural affection is there: "Woman, behold thy son." Forgiveness is there: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Mercy is there: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Constancy in trial is there: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Poverty is there: "They parted my garments among them." Mortification is there: "They pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell

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all my bones." Perseverance was there: "Thou that savest others, save Thyself, come down from the Cross." Confidence was there: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He had shown charity in going about doing good, but in the Passion by giving up His Life. He had shown patience and fortitude in bearing hardship, fatigue, and want, but now patience is tested by a death of intense pain. He had shown obedience to His blessed Mother and foster-father. Now, obedience is heightened by a surrender of Himself to a death of agony. The Cross was the mirror of virtues. In Christ crucified, the moral revelation reached its climax.

IV. Christ's Death was a Satisfaction for Sin

There was an idea that it reconciled the Father and the Son. The Father was represented as Justice, the Son as Mercy. But this were to make a division in the Trinity and in the one will of God. No reconcilation between the Divine Persons is possible, because there could be no division of will. The work of Christ, however, manifests the harmony existing between their divine attributes. God is Justice, and God is Love. By the Cross there was a combined revelation of the two. "Mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other." God upon the Cross reveals His Justice and Mercy in their entireness, the tenderness of His Love and His utter hatred of sin. It has been

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said that God might have redeemed the world in some other way. But God willed this plan of salvation, foreseeing that greater good would flow from it than from any other to the human race. God's love went forth to man when sinful. But He could not forgive him until he had acknowledged his guilt. A reparation was needed on the part of humanity which would thus remove the barrier to the free action of God's love to His people. How was this to be made? The creature, being sinful, could not make a worthy offering. Nor could he, even by perfect obedience in the future, make reparation for a guilty past. Some one must come who was sinless and needed not to make reparation for Himself; and Divine, that His action should have a divine and infinite value. Divine, and so adequate to satisfy God's Justice; and infinite, that His satisfaction might be available to all minkind.

V. The Cross is the Source of Merit

Our Lord not only made a satisfaction for our sins, but obtained by His merits a claim for our reward. God will give to every Christian a reward for every good work done. An action to be meritorious must have three qualities. First, it must be good, Christ merited because all His actions were holy and good. "I do always those things that please Him." Meritorious actions must also be voluntary. Christ was capable of moral choice. He could be conscious of effort in directing His

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human will. He pleased not Himself, but said, "Not my will but thine be done." Moreover actions to be meritorious must be done by grace. Now Christ had a supernatural as well as a Divine Life. He had the first because He in all things was like unto His brethren. He possessed therefore an habitual or sanctifying grace. His Divinity did not take its place. All His actions were thus done in grace, and voluntary and good. He gained thereby a reward. The mercy of God was its primary cause, but as due from the Divine Justice, it rested on Covenant. God has been pleased to confirm His promises with an oath.

As concerning the Priesthood of Christ He said, "The Lord sware and said, Thou art a Priest forever." Christ thus merited the reward that was His by reason of His human will corresponding to His Divinity. He gained thereby the fulfillment of His Father's promise to send the Holy Ghost. While He merited for Himself, the merits of His Passion pass beyond His own Person. He merited for all who are united with Him. Thus every good deed of a true believer being done in Christ, in Him will attain its reward. "God will give to every man according as his work has been."

VI. The Cross is a Source of Compunction

God willed this public form of death that His death might be judiciously certified to and also might be a spectacle. His death was to become an

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object of contemplation for all mankind. At His foot stood the centurion, and also a crowd of curiosity-moved people. We see in each the effect on the mind and on the human heart. The centurion was not moved by feelings of pity. He had witnessed many a crucifixion. He was accustomed to such scenes of death. But this one differed from all he had ever witnessed. He had never seen such a sufferer. He heard the words of love and mercy. The loud cry of supernatural victory puzzled him. The sufferer differed from any of the human race. Conviction came into his mind. Surely this man was the Son of God. The people who had drawn near were heart-touched. Whatever their previous feelings, the spectacle of death had vanquished them. They felt the power of the Cross, and it had conquered them. They felt their own relation to the event. They had cried out "Crucify Him." As a manifestation of their own actions, they smote their breasts. It was a sign of compunction.

There are three signs of sorrow for sin. Attrition, contrition, compunction. The first arises from the discovery that sin brings its punishment. The second arises from the recognition that sin is an offence against God. In the last, sorrow for sin arises from the love of Jesus crucified. Compunction is thus the creation of the Cross. The compunction of the people was the result of grace. Those very persons who had rejected Him were visited inwardly with an unction from the Holy One. It was the beginning of that grace which has gone out through-

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out the world. For the Cross is not only a fact but a mystery. Jesus Christ, by word and Sacrament, is evidently set forth crucified amongst us. Our sins caused the Passion. Christ endured for each individual. The spirit of compunction, which began at Calvary, moves every penitent heart today.

MEDITATION X

THE RESURRECTION VICTORY

Prelude

CHRIST uttered a loud cry. He had said, "No man taketh my life from Me." By His loud cry, He declares His power. By His own act, He separates body and soul and commends His spirit to the Father. To the centurion who had stood by many a crucifixion, but none like this, the words and conduct of our Lord wrought conviction. "Truly this man was the Son of God." Behold the penitents smiting their breasts and departing. Hear the loud crash with which the veil of the Temple is rent in twain. Through Christ the way is now open to the Holy of Holies. Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus. The centurion officially notified the Roman Governor that Christ is dead. With touching tenderness the Holy Body is taken from the Cross. It is placed in the empty tomb, hewn out of the rock. It is anointed with spices, and wrapped in linen, after

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the Eastern fashion. The stone at the entrance is officially sealed. The Roman guard is set. The shining of the paschal moon presents surprise. The terrified Apostles hide themselves. It looked as if death had conquered and Satan's triumph was complete.

But the Body and Soul of Christ, though separated from one another, were neither of them separated from His Divine Nature. His Body therefore could not see corruption. It had Divine Life in itself. Our Lord's soul, attended by that of the penitent thief, enters the place of the departed spirits. There were assembled those who had looked forward in faith to Christ's Coming. Already John the Baptist, the Forerunner, had announced Him to them. Jesus comes and preaches to "the spirits who were in prison." By His word, He communicated Himself to them. They received what we do by Sacramental Grace. They became thus the spirits of just men, justified by faith, and made perfect.

They were made ready to ascend with Him. Then our Lord brought back His soul and united it to His Holy Body. He rises through the grave clothes and the rocky tomb. The shaken earth throws down the soldiers who, terrified, flee. Jesus has triumphantly risen. But He does not come back to His old condition as when Lazarus was raised. He has passed through death and has the keys of death and hell in His hand. By His Victory, He has changed death from a punishment of sin into a

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gate of Eternal Life. "This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Prayer

O Lord, Mighty Victor over death and hell, Who didst die for our sins and rise again for our justification, grant that we may know Thee and the power of Thy Resurrection. Grant that we may be transformed by Thy indwelling, made partakers of the Divine Nature, be filled with all the fulness of God and share with Thee in Thy everlasting Glory for Thy mercies' Sake. Amen.

Address

Our lives and character are to be changed. We cannot be what we once were. Nature must be transformed by grace. The old Adam must be put to death. We must not cease our conflict until self-love is subdued. Our old nature must be cast out. With deep humility, we must seek after perfection. We must not place in an ambitious spirit any ideals before us. Surrendered to God's Will, we must desire to become what He would have us become. We must be spiritually content to be some little thing in the Kingdom of God. We must seek perfection with the spirit disengaged from all self-interest. We must leave ourselves in God's hands to do with us as He sees fit.

We are to be as clay in His hands Who is the potter, and can refashion us after His Will. O, to

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be wholly surrendered to Him, and trust His love! We must be willing to be little, to be poor, to fail, to be disliked, or to be despised. Self must die that the new self may be created in us. We must die first of all with Christ in order to rise with Him. The Resurrection of Christ is not only a fact to be believed, but must be unto us a living power. It must deliver us from dead works, works done in the power of nature, and make our works pleasing to God by being done in the power of the Spirit.

Christ did not appear to His enemies. He had done His work with them. In the days of His Resurrection, He was with His own. The Apostles were assembled together and the doors were shut. Here, as Religious, is our lesson. In the Religious life, we shut out the world. Our Holy Rule helps us to do this. We have parted from it. Its schemes and plans are no longer of any special interest to us. We must guard ourselves against curiosity concerning its affairs. The world will go on in its unbelieving way until the end comes. We are to practise the spirit of detachment. We are to mortify those affections which lead us to it. The world's pleasures, honours, delights, have, or ought to have, no attraction for us. Even true and holy affection must be controlled.

Religious often injure their spiritual progress by undue attachment to externes. Christ, having entered on His Mission, did not go back to visit His Blessed Mother. Nor did the Apostles who

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had left their nets seek again their father. The soul should guard itself against filling its imagination by novels with fictitious subjects of interest. The soul should be as a garden in which to commune with the Lord. It should be so detached from all forms of work as to be willing to change its work, to go anywhere, to work with anyone at the call of obedience. O the blessedness of having a free heart, one set at liberty by the power of Divine Grace.

Our Lord in the days of His Resurrection opened the minds of His followers to the meaning of Holy Scripture. "He opened to us the Scripture." He began from Moses and all the Prophets, and interpreted to them the things concerning Himself." A Religious should be familiar with the Word of God. In your Community, dear Sisters, it is read every day at Terce. You want so to study it as to have a general knowledge of the separate books. You should be able to meet some of the common objections, as for instance to the miracles or some moral teachings in the Old Testament. Miracles are the natural laws of the spiritual kingdom. The standard of morality revealed by God to man is a progressive one. Above all you should know well the Gospels and their characteristics. Thus in St. Matthew we have the King and the Kingdom set forth. In St. Luke, the Priesthood of Christ more particularly. In St. John, we have His Divinity, Incarnate Life, and Sacraments. St. Mark teaches us of Christ as the Prophet and Man. Thus

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the symbols of the Gospels are the lion, symbolizing Christ's Kingship, the eagle His Divinity, the ox His Priesthood and sacrificial aspect. St. Mark brings Him before us under the type of a Man and Prophet. Learn texts of Holy Scripture in relation to different subjects, the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, His promises in the New. Treasure them in your heart. Oft repeat them to yourself. Dear to me are Thy words as one that findeth great spoil.

A Religious must be devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. In the Day of His Resurrection we find our Lord standing on the shore preparing the miraculously obtained food. There is the fire, symbolizing the Holy Ghost; the broiled fish, the Crucified Lord; the honey, typical of His reconciliation and sweetness; the water through which the net of the Church enclosing the fish are brought to Christ symbolizes baptism. All the baptized are in that net, and Christ bids them draw near to the Heavenly feast and come and dine. In a most significant way He reveals the mystery of His Presence in the Holy Eucharist to the disciples at Emmaus. They were wanderers from Jerusalem, but Christ revealed Himself to them. First their hearts were warmed by His teaching, then He took bread and blessed and brake it, and as if it represented Himself, He vanished from bodily sight. It was not the Eucharist but the teaching concerning it. Our Blessed Lord, under the forms of bread and wine, remains

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in His Church. His presence with us is a source of our strength, our life and joy. How should not the Religious rejoice in His presence, worship Him and love Him with an increasing love? Here he repeats His life when visible amongst us. Here in the Sacrament of the Altar He leads a hidden life. Here He gives us a lesson of humility. Here He extends His visible life, going about doing good. Here He compassionately comes to feed us with Himself, the Bread from Heaven. Here He comes to heal us like the good Samaritan, binding up our wounds and pouring in the oil and wine of His own nature. Here He is the Good Shepherd Who seeks after us, and bears us back in His embrace to the fold. Here He is repeating His sorrowful life, neglected, disbelieved, rejected, often insulted by those He came to save. Blessed is the part of a Religious, who by her worship and love can make some reparation to Him. Blessed their portion who can sit at His feet, and be blessed by His Presence. The Holy Eucharist is the joy of the Christian heart, the very gate to Heaven.

Confession is the strength and comfort of the Religious. Our Lord in His Love established it. He knows well our frailty, our weakness, how often we are taken by surprise, how hard sometimes the monotony of the life is, what are our struggles and needed endurance. In His great Love He has provided for us. Note the fulness and freeness with which He gives us absolution. The fulness; there

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is no sin to which it does not extend. The freeness; it may be had for the seeking. The Absolution so dear and blessing cost Christ His dread Passion. He loves to exercise His right. Go to Confession knowing that our Lord loves to absolve. The gift He bestows is both preventitive and purifying. He loves to adorn the soul, as a mother loves to adorn her child. We go to Him and it gives Him delight. Why go, we may sometimes say, when so little is to be confessed? Because the Sacrament imparts beyond forgiveness special grace. It strengthens and invigorates the soul. It increases sanctifying or habitual grace. The custom helps to watchfulness, and to the keeping of abiding sorrow. The preparation by careful examen sometimes shows us new faults. We must not be afraid to see them. It's a token of God's love when He shows them to us. Make an act of penitence before you approach the tribunal. Make acts of thanksgiving or reparation afterwards. Add something to the penance given. If you have offended another, seek her out, apologize, make an act of true charity. Every good confession prepares for a happy death.

Our Lord in the Resurrection visited the Disciples. He saluted them with the Benediction, "Peace be unto you." He uttered no reproaches for their desertion. He took them back into His own companionship. He called them by the endearing term "Friend." With what love and tenderness does He not restore Peter to his forfeited Apostleship?

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How He condescends to Thomas' rationalizing infirmity, and converts him to the Faith. He first of all seeks the wanderers, sends a message to broken-hearted Peter, makes the Magdalene an apostle to the Apostles. He comes to be our companion in the way of life. We are wayfarers, and He walks beside us. His words develop faith and love in our hearts. How must every Religious grow in love and ever pray "Abide with us, for the day is far spent."

MEDITATION XI

THE ASCENDED LORD

Prelude

PLACE yourself on Mount Olivet. Our Lord fulfills here the Prophecy, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" Gradually our Lord ascends from earth. The Apostles kneel in adoration. Christ stretches forth His hand in blessing. A cloud, it may be of Angels, hides Him from their sight. He ascends passing through the nine orders of Angels. His Blessed Body shines with a Heavenly glory. He has put on glorious apparel, and girded Himself with strength. The days of His humiliation are over. With a glory surpassing that of Mt. Tabor, St. John beholds Him. The Angels welcome His return with songs of triumph. "Lift up your heads

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ye everlasting doors that the King of Glory may come in." Let us, in union with Him, fall down in spirit and cry, "Holy Holy, Holy, Honour and glory and power and might be unto thee for ever and ever."

By His ascension Christ did not go away to some distant star. Such an action could not be called rightly an ascension. He did not go from one locality in this material universe to another. Emancipated from the conditions of time and space, He ascended into power, into a new union with God. He is at the right hand of power.

He has taken our nature upon Him to wear it to all Eternity. It is in union with this human nature that we receive the gifts of our new birth, and the sustaining life of his Blessed Body and Blood. Out from His Humanity a virtuous strength flows which has come to us. Through union with Him we find acceptance, and through union with His merits we meet our reward. He wears our nature eternally, that through union with it we may behold the Beatific Vision. The union of His human nature with His Divine Nature is the basis of this further gift to us. It is through a continued union thus with His glorified Humanity that we obtain that vision which, whilst still endowed with free will, we are kept from exercising to our harm.

Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. Consider the beauty of this present world, how it

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manifests not only the wisdom but the beauty of the Divine Being. But what shall be the beauty and the glory of that world which Christ prepares for those who are His Saints? They have on earth loved and served, laboured and suffered for Him. Now the conflict and the trouble is over. Now the great love enfolds them in itself. Now God opens the hidden treasures of His goodness and beauty to them. The heart cannot conceive the things God has prepared for those that love Him.

Again: Our Lord as our Great High Priest stands there pleading the merits of His Passion on our behalf. He hears the cry of all His people, the prayer of the smallest child and of the oldest follower, of those in sickness and in health, of those afflicted or rejoicing, of those struggling with temptation or walking in peace, of those enduring as wayfarers, or drawing nigh their end in death, of poor sinners asking for help and mercy, and of saints in increasing grace. Every prayer is heard and every prayer is answered. He takes our human prayers, with all their imperfections, and as we pray His will should be done, He forms them anew. He presses home. Upholding His pierced Hand, He claims their answer. He thus makes good His promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."

Again: The Saints follow our Lord as the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Heaven is no idle place. The great design of God in Christ is thus to unfold itself. We know not what it is, but we have to take

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part in it. What we know is, all will be harmonious. Holiness will reign in all its members. Charity will abide and bind them in an indissoluble union. The Holy Spirit will fill and glorify them. They will work without suffering weariness. They will be freed from all temptation, delivered from all pain and sorrow.

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THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

MEDITATION

OUR Lord *calling* the disciples. A *call.* "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you."

1st Point. A personal call. Vocation is the voice of God; the choice of God. The call is from a Divine Person.

2d Point. The individual call. A call to *you:* The Word speaks; the Voice rings.

A "dead shock" by which we die to the world. A live shock, by which we live to God.

3d Point. The individual love. The Master calls by name; not for work, or because we are worthy; but that He may do a work *in* us, and to reveal Himself to us.

4th Point. The security of knowing God. The voice of God in us is God Himself, and as we obey Him, we know Him.

1ST INSTRUCTION. — THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

It is an extension of the Baptismal vows. Vows are recognized by the Church, by Ecumenical Councils.

The Religious Life is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and it is specially dedi-

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cated to God's service. Such a dedication to God we may see in the scriptures, and in Christ's life and teaching. See the counsels of perfection. There are commands and common precepts, and such are obligatory upon all Christians; but there are counsels whereby we may the more speedily and effectually reach perfection — "If thou wilt be perfect" (St. Matt. xix. 21) "sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" — give up everything thou hast, and be poor for Christ's sake (Poverty) — "And come" — give up thereby all earthly ties and be alone (Chastity) for Him. "And follow Me" — this embraces the three vows in itself, and especially signifies Obedience.

Christ, as the Representative Man, is a model and pattern for all men to follow. Religious as well as secular persons find their model in Him, His life and teaching.

Poverty. See Christ in His life and at His home. The foster-Son of a carpenter is a model for all poor and working persons. Then, when He started out upon His ministry, He went further and becomes the model of a Religious. His poverty is then voluntary. He leaves His home entirely, making no provision for His future support, just putting Himself under God's protection.

Chastity. Christ's purity of life and teaching is for all people to follow. As a Religious, see Him conquering His affections when He gives up his Mother at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee (St. John ii. 4). In thus addressing her, He shows

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her that henceforth she is as a stranger to Him: "Woman," or, as we should now interpret it, "Lady." She, too, shows how she has learned detachment in her reply (verse 5). And again He says that those who do His Father's Will, shall be as His brother and sister and mother. Then in temptation see Him conquer,

Lust of the eye,
Lust of the flesh,
Pride of life.

Obedience. His life is a lesson to all in this respect. As a child, obedient to His Mother; obedient to the Church, keeping the feasts; obedient to the Law; obedient to the state, paying taxes, etc.; and when saying "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," acknowledging that he had claims which it was right to consider. As a Religious, note His perfect obedience to His Superior, the Holy Spirit, dwelling within Him; obeying in thought, word and deed; and having for His Rule, the Old Testament, with its prophecies, types, etc., of the Messiah. Therein He found written just what He was to do, marked out for Him by God. This explains His oft-repeated, "that the scriptures may be fulfilled." Consider Him as a Master of Novices, training His own Novices, the Apostles, in the Religious Life. They were called apart from the other disciples.

Poverty. He taught them this, and they gave up everything to follow Him; poverty of spirit also (St. Mark ii. 23; St. John vi. 5–13).

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Chastity. In their lives: they left all to follow Him. It involved detachment as regards place, people and work.

Obedience. When He sends them out on their mission, notice how He gives them directions even in little details, even as to what they should say and do; and in many cases how He tried them, telling them to do strange and apparently impossible things; and telling them, too, to be "as a little child," a child being especially one who is under authority.

All done *for* Him, *in* Him, and *by* Him.

2D INSTRUCTION

Triconomy of man's nature: Body, Soul and Spirit.

Three roots of evil within: 1. Lust of the flesh, 2. Lust of the eye, 3. Pride of life.

1. Luxury, Gluttony, Sloth.
2. Covetousness, Envy.
3. Non-humility, Anger.

Three evil forces without: World, Flesh, Devil.

Three opposing good influences: Christ, Heaven, Holy Spirit.

Two ways: *Easy*, C[illegible]ist. *Hard*, Self-culture.

Three Christian remedies: Humility, Poverty of spirit, Purity of heart.

THE THREE COUNSELS

1. Why these three Counsels? Our nature consists of body, soul and spirit. The difference between soul

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and spirit: The soul is connected with animal life. The spirit faculties are cognizant of God; — worship. Conscience is a spiritual sense, a knowledge of right and wrong. In each, body, soul and spirit, is a root of sin, from the Fall, not utterly depraved, but injured, called the three wounds of man's nature: body, sensuality; soul, covetousness; spirit, pride. The three classes of sin are the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

Covetousness. The eye is the window of the soul; it sees through the eye, and desires what it sees. Its sin is to desire inordinately.

Pride. Man was made for God. There is an intuition of God in all men, so in all nations. All have the custom of burying their dead, or otherwise caring for them. This shows faith in a future life. Pride rebels against God: — independence. So from those three wounds all sin comes. The seven capital sins are resolved into three.

The three counsels are remedies for them: for sensuality, chastity; for covetousness, poverty; for pride, obedience.

In this world are three good forces: the Kingdom of Heaven; our Blessed Lord, the second Adam; the Holy Ghost.

Opposed to them are three evil forces: the world, the flesh and the devil, attacking the different parts of our nature: soul, body and spirit.

So, faithfully carrying out the three Counsels is the quickest way of obtaining perfection.

2. *And they are not given only as maxims, but as*

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an estate. We are called into an estate, and it is a calling.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (I. Cor. vii) speaks of "married" and "virgin." The Greek word means a condition, each an equally fixed estate (I. Cor. vii. 32–34).

Marriage is indissoluble. Virginity is equally so. The virgin is a perpetuation of His life, partaking of His own unchangeableness.

It depends upon His calling. Like marriage, a condition depending upon another person; in the religious life, depending upon our Lord. It is not a promise, nor a resolution.

A vow is applicable to a covenant. The Religious Life is a covenant between our Lord and the soul, each bound to the other.

3. *How do we enter this estate, or covenant?*

By some determinate act — vows. The act must be determined by which we enter. It has differed at different times, as forms of marriage may differ. The early form was by taking the veil.

Our right to do so, to take vows. The authority of Scripture (Job xxii. 27; Ps. xxii. 25; Numb. xxx. 2): The vow of the Nazarite, Numb. vi; the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv; the vow of Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 20; an individual vow, Lev. xxvii; the commutation of vows, Numb. xxx; a perpetual vow — Hannah and Samuel, Jepthah — Judges xi, 30, 31; St. Paul in Acts, xviii. 18.

It is believed that the Blessed Virgin had made a vow of perpetual virginity, in obedience to the

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Holy Spirit. Her reply to the angel was not from want of faith, but stating what she believed was a real difficulty.

In the New Testament, the estate is recognized, by St. Paul called widows (I. Tim. v. 9).

St. Ignatius, "Salute the virgins who are called widows."

The duties of widows and deaconesses: St. Paul (I. Tim. v. 8, 10). Age, sixty, means those who received the Church alms.

Virgins. The four daughters of Philip (Acts xxi. 9). The estate is established by God and regulated by the Church. We cannot leave it without sin. In this estate, all is given up for God. He is their portion.

4. (*a*) It is an estate in which all actions have a double value, and sin is double.

In all acts done in obedience to Rule, we merit not only the act itself, but obedience besides. Many things in the world are of no value, indifferent; but everything in Religion is of value, because once for all dedicated to Him.

(*b*) Again, one does so much in a short time. At profession, all your life is given to Him; long or short, that is in His hands, but all is given to Him. Long or short, we have the same reward, for we have done all we can. A Religious is dear to God because she has put it out of her power to take back. Not given day by day, but all possible good that we can do is given once for all. Our will is given.

(*c*) It is fruitful in merits, like martyrdom. We

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give all, body, soul and spirit; no martyr gives more. As martyrdom is a second baptism, so profession is called a second baptism.

(*d*) But it is most glorious because of its special union with our Lord. He allowed on earth certain people to serve Him, so now Religious. The Religious Life is a special espousal, the perfection of the baptismal espousal; and the Religious is especially His own, hereafter to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

3D INSTRUCTION. — THE CALL

A Religious is one who, in obedience to the Divine call, renounces the world and devotes herself to Jesus Christ, to be especially united to Him; and whom He deigns to receive in the number of His Spouses by the grace of the call He has given her.

A call is personal in that it comes from God Himself, and individual in that it is directly and especially *to me;* this idea enters the life of all Religious.

How do you know you are called? Interiorly, we have God's manifestation to the soul; and externally the call comes through the voice of authority. Ordinarily, one feels himself inwardly drawn to the life, and to such an one there comes a knowledge of the life as a covenanted estate. We see, then, that knowledge is one element of the divine call. Again, it is not a passing, temporal

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feeling, but a fixed desire to lead the life, and a desire continually growing stronger.

Externally, one cannot tell until he tries, so he enters a society, and subjects himself to the Rule and customs, etc., and then after the time of probation he is elected; those who know so well what the life is, testify to the Priest that they consider the person fitted for the life, and God, through His Priest, then gives us externally our call.

Vocations. There are some things that show at once that we are not called to lead the Religious Life, for example, duties which make it necessary for one to remain at home; and yet there are limits to those duties: one need not feel that he must stay at home because he happens to be useful or agreeable there. Ordinarily, if one might leave home to be married, there would be no obstacle that should prevent that person's leading the Religious Life.

Consider, too, that it is a call to two parties: a call to the soul to come, and a call to the parents and friends to give them up, as with Abraham and Isaac. If both respond to the call, both participate in the blessing God gives.

Persons are called as He wills, and when He wills; and, too, He calls whom He wills. A person may be useful and popular in the world, but God has a right to claim the best for Himself. He calls as He pleases in death, and He may likewise call into a state of life. The call may come in different periods of life, but it is when He pleases.

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We cannot too deeply cherish this idea of vocation; it grows deeper and sustains one through life. It is a comfort to us, in that we feel that a special work and place are marks of special love.

It is a delight too: every Christian has a place and a mission, but there is a special nearness as Spouses of Christ.

It is a strength, too. A true vocation is a covenanted estate. He is pledged to us, and we to Him. The duties, however, are on our side, and the promises on His, and when God is with us, all is safe. He takes us "for better or for worse." Let us then endeavour faithfully to go on in the line put down, or marked out for us, by God. Carry this esteem of your vocation into even the most minute details of your life, and do not let it be simply a general regard. A Religious Community is not an association of Christian ladies united for work, merely. The world acknowledges the power of associations, but that is a secular view. Our Rule is not for that purpose and is not to be so regarded. All things in it, and in the Religious Life, are to aid one in cultivating personal holiness and interior holiness. That is the aim.

4TH INSTRUCTION. — RENUNCIATION

RENUNCIATION. There are three degrees: 1. Renunciation of the external world. 2. Renunciation of the world within the Convent. 3. Renunciation of the world within ourselves.

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In renouncing the external world, we come apart from it. In Scripture the word *world* has different meanings; as, the natural world; mankind; or the kingdom created by sin, including all creatures in opposition to God—creatures meaning things material; or thought, in ascetic theology. And this is the world which we renounce, as Religious. All Christians renounce it; but a Religious keeps herself apart from all intercourse with the world that she may the more exclusively devote herself to the service of God. She is apart from the world, her relations and society, and this is the case, whether an Order be enclosed or not. An enclosed Order has the walls around, whereas an open Order builds the walls. Saint Vincent de Paul first introduced this "invasion of the world by convent life"; that is, the Sisters going out in their work, as they do in open Orders. He told his Sisters they must carry their call with them, build a cloister within their own heart.

How then shall we keep apart? Hold no more converse with "externs" than duty and charity require; do not encourage people to visit us for their or our own gratification, merely. Have no special friend or follower outside; we must meet with them to some extent; and then, too, they will write to us. But in talking with them govern words and manner. Do not ask eagerly for the news of the day, about friends, society, etc. In manner do not seek clever wit or smart repartee, but be grave, though not morose or affected, cheer-

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ful but not frivolous, always with restraint, thus showing self-control. Neither the loud laughter, etc., nor the manners of a fine lady of society. A something that will show recollectedness of spirit.

Our natural warmth of heart, in manner and speech, is to be toned down. These things are to be observed in our letters also. It is a good plan after an interview to review the conversation and ask oneself, "How did I manage it? Did I give way to a worldly manner and a dissipated spirit?"

Always in conversation, etc., aim at doing some good. Christ's Spouses are His missionaries, too, winning souls for Him. It is no compliment to a Religious to have those who talk with her say, "She is so amusing and interesting, just like other people!" She should not be like other people.

A Religious specially seeks to extend the Kingdom of God in her own heart. Thus she is a missionary within and without; this is the burning desire; her enemies around her are stirred up to greater efforts against her.

How does the world show itself within the Convent? There will be dissipation and disorder, relaxed observance of Rule, private intercourse of several imperfect Religious, thereby strengthening their faults.

When you see one of your Sisters with a worldly spirit, have charity, and say nothing unless it be the duty of your office to speak; then make more vigorous efforts yourself and pray for your Sister.

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When Gideon was sent to reform Israel, he first broke the idols in his own home.

How prevent such a spirit? Be careful to avoid all private friendships, or particular ones. We have natural affinities, and then we work more with some, and like them better. We cannot feel toward all alike. Christ did not with the Apostles and Saints. The difference between a right and wrong feeling is, that a wrong feeling is based upon natural sympathies, etc., wholly, and a right feeling is not; for a Religious loves Christ and others for His sake. In seeking to gain others' affection we are taking that which is God's; that is, we are guilty of theft. Christ must be our first and only love.

What are the evil consequences of such a spirit? Charity is wounded, our own soul is injured, and it gives rise, too, to cliques and party-spirit.

Great desire of increasing in numbers, for this world's support, ambition for places — all this is wrong. Be servants one of another, Christ is our centre and Founder; Christ draws us all. In order to renounce the world, we must make the Sacred Heart of our dear Lord our cell, and go into It and live there, in, and for, and through, and with Him.

5TH INSTRUCTION. — RENUNCIATION II

Renunciation of the interior world, that is, within ourselves. This is painful; and, indeed, perfection in this, here, is, we may say, impossible. Self-renunciation is a life work. "I will renounce myself,

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for I am absorbed in His interests and in His love." Our acts and those of Pagans differ as regards their asceticism. Theirs are acts of self-torture to destroy evil; for theirs is one of the Gnostic errors, thinking that any part of our nature could be evil in itself, and their motive is mere selfishness, and there is no love or grace in it, for it is not done in and for Christ. We make our sacrifices from our love for our Lord, and in the power of His Love.

In our self-renunciation we want to root out vice, subdue passions, mortify senses; fix the natural inconstancy and levity of our mind; order and control the affections of the heart; reduce our self-love into servitude.

This we must do by the way of resolution, prayer and meditation. Always remember it.

We shall not become good by many maxims, or by profound meditations; but let us take simple truths and gaze upon them in meditation, until they are fixed in our mind and we know them like one who studies a picture until he knows it so well that a thought will bring it before him. The pilgrim who has renounced herself sees Christ before her, and Him she steadily looks to, although many cruel and fierce enemies may crowd around her.

This will be her remembrance in adversity or prosperity. In meditation consider the smallest sin as some wild beast or serpent, and make an act of fear and hatred accordingly. Exercise the imagination in thus seeing pictures; then say, "I will renounce myself for the love of Christ."

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A good Religious determines to fight against all sins in this holy warfare. "I do not know them all, but I will fight against all that I do know, as they are shewn me."

A good Religious avoids falling deliberately into any sin, however trivial it may be. Venial sins are of three kinds: 1. Those committed inadvertently; from these no one is free. 2. Those of comparatively small importance. 3. Those committed from want of deliberation, and the matter concerned not being enough to make it a mortal sin.

A soul's ardor may be measured by its attention in putting down all venial sin. In this spiritual conflict we shall meet with two enemies — presumption and discouragement. Of these the latter is the more common. No sober-minded person could be long or easily presumptuous; it comes with a more fallen state. But discouragement is common. We have a high ideal before us; we have resolved to put down all sins; we must ask Christ to make it our passion to subdue venial sins. Perhaps one will find himself falling into these sins; then avoid despair, and remember that grace is slow, and that God is never discouraged with us, so let us not despair of ourselves. If we had all the grace we wanted at once, it would make us proud and the work of grace would be undone. When we fall into some sin we have been striving against, think that God wants us to overcome some other fault before He gives us the grace to conquer the one against which we have been striving.

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He wishes things to be in a certain order. We may seem to be falling oftener sometimes, when we are trying; it is the devil making a harder attack, and we may be really growing in grace. The Religious Life really tries us. Many failures, then, need not discourage us. Again, after many long years of trying, perhaps, old habits and faults seem to still cling to us. God leaves them as marks or warnings of Egypt, to make us humble. "He Who is with us is greater than those who are against us."

Another thing we may remember for our encouragement. Our foes are very blind. Satan with his legions seems very powerful; they seem cunning and adroit; they know human nature by long experiences; they seem, too, to be each given to a special evil, as a devil of lying, or of vanity, etc. But one thing they do not understand is grace. They do not realize or believe it, and it baffles them; they do not and cannot know Christ. They blind themselves, too, in their eager and impatient haste to conquer a soul; they "get mad," so to speak, at its resistance, and put temptations before it from which it shrinks in horror, seeing thereby the hideousness of sin. They thus overdo the matter and work against themselves. "I will not be discouraged, by God's help." But we may not always be able to control our nature, and when low spirits come, and we are despondent, meet them by acts of faith and trust in Christ, and acts of hope, too.

God will suggest to each one various ways of

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self-encouragement. Now in this battle there are two friends whom we may have with us, namely, Recollection and Fidelity. Cultivate the art or science of recollection (which, by the way, means keeping God in mind, not self). For this, one may make rules. For example, make the sign of the Cross when first awake in the morning; let your first look be toward Heaven, your first word, of God. Use ejaculatory prayers. One's work will make a difference in one's acts. Try and make an act of oblation of self and the work, before and after each section of it. Make certain ejaculations when you go into certain places, as into Chapel, or Church, or in going to bed, as "I will lay me down in peace," etc. By all this it is not meant that we must think when to think of God, but let the places and the things suggest the thoughts themselves. As when a train before passing a certain place rings a bell in the distance, so these things ring a bell in our memory and attract our thoughts to God; — in teaching, sweeping, cleaning, visiting, talking, hearing a clock strike, taking a letter. In nursing, our care must be of and for God, the invalid reminding us of Him.

Let us practise those outward things which help us in this. Be controlled in manner, not hasty, but deliberate, quiet, calm. Nature is always in a hurry, but grace is slow.

Fidelity is one of our best friends. Trifles are of immense importance. See how careful Christ was in training His disciples: "Go two by two," "take no scrip," "one coat," etc., rules in all the small

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details. Fidelity strengthens our character and forms habits, and is one element of perfection, which consists in finished work.

Remember that our dear Lord's desire for us, as His special followers, is far, far greater than our own desires can ever be. "O Lord, empty me of myself, and fill me with Thyself."

6TH INSTRUCTION. — COMMUNITY SPIRIT, I

Adam and Eve are a type of family life. We enter a Community in which natures and actions are to be trained and developed in the highest way. What family life does, Community life also does. In the family life there are four things: I. The sympathies and affections are educated, brought out by trial, illness, etc. II. Unselfishness is developed. We are not units, but are dependent one upon another. In family life each gives way to the other, when properly trained; as a brother cares for a sister, or as one gives up ties to support a parent, etc. III. Formation of individual character. Each has his own gifts which are brought out in various ways. IV. Ties are formed by having a common centre in parents, in the common room, family struggles, or achievements which make a family one.

Compare with this the Community life. When our Lord calls us, we renounce the world and come into a society in which all these points are developed in a higher degree.

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I. In the Community life. Our affections are to be trained; not to be destroyed and we to become statues; that would injure and not develop us. The true love of others is often the test of our love for God: (*a*) Our affections are rightly directed when all are included. In the family, all are loved. There are no choices in the Community. Our affections are directed to all; all are our Sisters. We may not love all alike, but we shall show no difference. (*b*) Our affections are trained by being regulated by grace. That is, we look to see Christ in the souls of those around us. We love their souls, not merely by nature but by grace, by which we look through the characters into the souls. Then we love them because Christ loves them. We love them in spite of their faults and defects. God loves them and bears with them. (*c*) Our affections are trained because our love is controlled in its expressions. Every Religious puts a certain control upon the expressions of her love, does not act upon impulse, does not use those very strong terms which are used in the world, and are so often insincere. A Religious is sincere. (*d*) The affections are trained and intensified by a loving trust, and finding support in one another. Great sufferings endured one with another, most closely unite souls — as in battles, shipwrecks, etc.

II. Unselfishness is developed in Community life by a constant putting self aside, a constant giving up one's own will. A person in the world has his own rules for prayer and fasting, etc.; but

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when he comes into a Community he must put self aside, and throw himself into the rules of the Community.

A Religious Community is a whole, just as a family is. A family is a natural creation, and a Community is a creation of grace. We are not to live separate lives; but a Community, inspired by a common spirit, presents a new thing, as it were, to God. We create something which would not otherwise exist, and it is to be eternal as are all things formed by grace, which last forever.

As we work together here, and present our work to God here, so hereafter this Community spirit is a beautiful gift to present to God. We are not only to be loyal to our society, but to create something to present to God for His Glory.

III. So character is developed in Community life more largely than in family life, because it is larger, with different temperaments, nationalities, etc. Also because in family life there is flattery. Children look up to their parents, as they should, but their estimate is apt to be excessive. There is also an unconscious flattery; faults are not spoken of because it may make trouble; but in the Community we are removed from this flattery. Here our faults are pointed out for our dear Lord's sake, that we may overcome them. No spirit of criticism or pride should be shown in pointing out a fault, but only love.

A Community life brings out our own faults as nothing else does. It is sure to try the soul of

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every one who comes into it; we grow good by having trials. The old idea of a monk was, that he had gone out to make war with himself, not, as the world says, to get out of temptation. It brings out faults which we never knew when in the world. A Community life strengthens us by throwing us among higher natures, among those who have been longer in the Religious Life.

IV. The ties made in the Community Life are made for Eternity; they are to last forever. It has its struggles too, as the family life has.

Each Religious Community has its special spirit. Ours should be our special union to our Lord, as our dedication is to His Name.

7TH INSTRUCTION. — COMMUNITY SPIRIT, II

Community spirit is a special work of grace. We grow in personal sanctification as we grow together, as a Community for work, etc. This is a difficult thing, and does not come by chance, or as a matter of course; each one must create his part. Labour and pray for a Community spirit. It is the love of God that makes us one. We are emptied of ourselves and united to each other. His Light shows through us.

I. What hinders growth of Community spirit?

What hinders interiorly? 1. Striving to be first. Seeking to be popular. Ambition for special place or work, etc. The true spirit is, I will do whatever God gives me to do. The value of our work

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is in its motive. In some Communities it is the rule to change cells once every year, perhaps on Christmas. One may not care especially about the Office one has to fill, but desires a special place in the heart of the Superior, or some influence, or one is particular about one's rights. Do not use the Community for one's self only, even for spiritual advancement, thus revolving around self, as one's own centre.

2. A critical spirit. This often comes with increasing holiness. "Judge not," we find at the end of Christ's sermon instead of at the beginning. Independence of thought is sometimes covered up under zeal for God and the Community. Trust God first; the Community is His work, not man's, and our Lord is our Master, so do not mind mistakes. God will correct them. He often turns His servant's failures to His Glory. He leaves trials, etc., that He may conquer them, and shew the strength of His grace thereby, through prayer, charity, etc.

3. Special friendships. Do not have one particular friend. Have no private talks. We cannot make a society by rules, we must have an interior spirit, too. "Let your complaints be made known unto God." If we accept, or long for, human sympathy, we lose our Lord's.

4. Natural antipathies. We cannot like all alike. We must guard against a natural spirit of antipathy, and not let it increase. Nature in such things is not a safe guardian.

To help you in this: (*a*) Watch over your speech.

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(*b*) Do not indulge deliberately in ugly thoughts. (*c*) Do not allow yourself to rejoice, if you suddenly hear something to the disadvantage of one whom you do not love. At such a time "catch yourself," and make an act of humility, etc. Do not feel troubled when you notice faults. Make acts of reparation; it is something more to conquer for God's Glory. (*d*) Govern yourself exteriorly, and do not do anything to show your antipathy. (*e*) If working with such a person, accept her as a companion in Jesus Christ; thus doing shall ye grow in grace.

Exteriorly? 1. Speaking of other's failings. When doing work after others, do not remark their failures. Do not insinuate anything against them, or repeat anything to their disadvantage. People with fun and humour, when they see little weaknesses or peculiarities, naturally are inclined to speak of them. Do not. A witty person has opportunities of humiliation in controlling the temptation to say "good things."

2. In talking with each other we want to avoid warm discussions upon any subjects — politics, theology, rules, spiritual questions, or spiritual life. Be detached from your own opinions; hold them in humility and modesty. In discussions, there is human nature, and grace is lost. Where there is a difference of opinion, do not argue for the sake of triumphing, nor even talk warmly. If you see an argument coming, adroitly change the subject and thus exercise your mother wit.

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3. Want of courtesy in any way in little acts. It is not uncommon in family life.

Conquer those faults first which interfere with your neighbour, but do not have the "varnish of civilized heathen," only. We see in our Sisters Christ's Brides, and we reverence Him in them. In royal scenes, all respect is shown those on the throne. Here we have for our companions those who are called to be about the Throne of God.

II. What helps growth of Community spirit?

1. Love of God is the basis of it all. It unites us to Him, and thus to each other.

2. Positive acts of courtesy, and sincerity in expressions: My sister, our dear Mother, etc.

3. Cheerfulness. Make the best of things as they are. Be interested in others' work. Ask about it, and pray for it.

4. Well kept recreation. Take it together. Learn spiritual silence even in freedom of speech. Go in with God, keep with Him, and come out with Him.

5. Personal prayers for others. Ours is a relation of grace. Our Community is a creation of grace.

8TH INSTRUCTION. — THE MOTIVE

A Religious is one who has left the world, and entered a Community, to devote herself to Jesus Christ. Her motive should be to be loved by Jesus, and to acquire virtues that are pleasing to Him, that she may make herself agreeable to Him. It has been said by some, that in entering a Community,

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we seek God's glory; others say, our own happiness. But surely, God's glory is so bound up with our happiness that we cannot seek one without obtaining the other. We are called to be united to our Lord in a special way. We are bound to aspire after perfection. Some think perfection is impossible, but all things are possible with God. Our will must be united to that of our Lord. There are some temptations we must guard against, such as when one thinks one could do better in serving God in some other work, than that which one is now doing; or, if one could have more time for prayers, etc. Our Lord combined the two lives, active and contemplative, not one alone but the two combined.

Some are tempted to a false humility — "others may aspire to that, but it is above me." It is mistaken pride that makes us hold back from gaining perfection. The Religious must say, I am called to perfection in obedience to my Rule.

We are not to use a Community as a way to be good, but as it is marked out for us in our Rule. The relaxed drag behind, are careless about first thoughts, do not practise recollection, etc. The careful one makes frequent acts of ejaculatory prayer, comes back quickly after a fall, etc.

A diligent Religious seeks to keep her Rule faithfully. She is faithful in little things, not drawn aside by little excuses, not easily dispensing herself. She also keeps it piously, with the spirit of devotion. We may sometimes have a feeling of dry-

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ness, and we do not like to pray. But there is no sin in that; it may be God would strengthen our faith. As there is a purpose in the dry season of the earth, so it is in the dryness of our soul. Coldness is a different thing and may be put aside by a word with our Blessed Lord.

We must make a sincere resolution to profit by our prayers. We are not simply to say our Offices, but to go out with increased recollection, and to act upon them.

We are to guard against particular practices in our prayers. We may consider them of too much value. We may say, "I am going to say the Gradual Psalms so often," or a Litany, and we are put out if we have to give it up.

We must be careful not to undertake too many vocal prayers. If we are asked to pray for some one, we may say yes, but we must not bind ourselves to any particular time, we must not promise more than we can perform.

We must not undertake anything of importance without the advice of our Director. We must not undertake anything that would make us singular. Our Lord draws very near to the tree that is covered with leaves, and looks under the leaves to see if there be any fruit.

9TH INSTRUCTION. — THE RULE

Tonight we will consider how a Religious devotes herself to her Lord, by her Rule.

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Our Rule separates us from the variable action of our own will. It is a means of union with God, it is a means of transforming character, it is to change our aim. It enables us to seek perfection in a regular way, and by regular means.

In the world our tastes keep changing, but a Rule helps to develop and strengthen our characters, so there is enforced an unbroken continuity of sanctified effort after perfection. We are separated from the world to be bound to God. It is a source of spiritual power. It may not be according to our tastes, indeed it may be repugnant to us, but if it be accepted by our will, it binds us closer to God.

What does "Religious" mean? Re-ligo — bound anew; so we are bound anew; more firmly bound to God by our Rule.

There is a special moral value in a life under Rule. We must strive to realize its importance, and when others fail in keeping it, it is no excuse for us. One who does not keep it is culpable, for she drags down others. One must shut one's eyes to others. One must say, I am not to be judged by them; but I must keep my Rule.

One or two temptations about keeping our Rule. One is: not to keep it, because it does not oblige us to, under sin. It is not a common temptation, but it is often mentioned in books. St. Francis de Sales says, "Indifference to Rule will lead to contempt of Rule, which is sin."

Contempt of Rule includes a deliberate will — not only disobeying, but wishing to do so; as, for

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instance, if a Religious eats fruit or anything out of hours, to gratify her taste, she yields to gluttony; but if she eats because she chooses to, she shews contempt of her Rule. A Religious shews contempt, if haughty when corrected; if she contends when told of the Rule; if she tries to draw others after her; if she ridicules the Rule; perseveres in spite of corrections.

Everything in the Rule is of value, nothing is trifling; speaking in the corridors, going to one another's cell, etc., are less important matters than others, less essential, but all have a moral value. Besides the Rule, every good Religious House has certain pious usages which have grown up with the House; everything cannot be put on paper. Such things are to be observed as well as the more formal statements of the Rule.

There is also strength which comes from the thought that we are not keeping the Rule alone, others are keeping it as we are, so it becomes a bond between us and unites us. We may have few tastes in common, but our common Rule binds us closer to each other; in union with our dear Lord we are bound to God, and live a common life, and lose ourselves in the personality of the Community.

A Christian saying "Our Father," says it in union with all Christendom. A Sister saying her Offices, says them for others as well as for herself. What we do, is for others as well as for ourselves. It enables us to meet the world by the spirit which is formed in us. All Religious are called to per-

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fection, but each Society in a special way: some by prayer, some by obedience, some by recollection.

We trust our Founder and our trainers, and know that our Rule will bring forth in us the special perfection sought in our own Community. As the flowers in a garden are different, each one having its own fragrance, so are different Religious Orders.

We must consider Who it is watches over us in our Rule. God is watching over us in our Religious Life.

Our Blessed Lord Himself lived under a Rule. His Life was moulded by a Rule written and given to Him by the Holy Ghost. What were the Holy Scriptures to Him? No one understood them as He did. They told Him just what to do, and He followed all out obediently. He knew their mystical meaning. The Psalter was His Office book. He threw His Mind into the Mind of Holy Scripture. I must keep the Rule — "that the Scripture may be fulfilled." On the Cross He said part of the 22d Psalm.

Think how our Lord is watching over us, as to how we keep our Rule.

A Christmas thought: "The Babe was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

Let us work it out in a Meditation.

Even in His Birth was He bound, and in His Life did He keep His Rule.

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10TH INSTRUCTION. — A VOW

A Religious makes her offering of herself to her Lord, by way of a vow.

Let us consider a vow in itself and its moral value.

A vow is a solemn promise which we make to God in some holy action, in which we intend to serve Him better than we could in any other way. It is a promise, not a resolution; it is solemn, and must be entered into with forethought, not rashly, or it would not be binding. It must be made with prayer, so as to be made with Divine Grace. It is not to be made experimentally; as one might say, "I want to live more strictly, I will try taking a vow." It is a promise made to God Almighty; it is not like a resolution, as "I will do so and so for myself," or as an intemperate person may make a resolution to give up drink.

A resolution is not necessarily made to God.

A vow must be of some good or holy action, or it would not be to God. Sometimes vows are not binding, because the matter concerned is wrong. It must not be of a mere indifferent matter, for we could not make that an offering to God; it must be the better of two ways, and more pleasing to God. It is a compact with God.

Whatever we give to God, He will give us something more in return. This is the law of natural and spiritual life, the law of exchange. In the natural life, the sea gives to the clouds and the

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clouds to the earth, etc. So in the spiritual world God does not make us, as a man makes a machine and stands apart from it. He is united to what He makes. "In Him we live, and move and have our being." The Angels are constantly receiving from God and giving back to Him, and growing stronger in the receiving and giving.

A vow is the recognition of the compact between us and God. "No man has given up houses and lands," etc. It is more blessed to give than to receive. So God gives the best, an hundred fold. A vow is taken for the purpose of pleasing God. We might take a vow for the obtaining a definite blessing, as Jacob did, who said, "If God will bless me I will give Him a tenth." But this is not the highest kind. It is, as it were, making our own bargain with God; it is not a bad vow, but a Religious vow is of a higher kind. We take it for the purpose of pleasing God, leaving it to Him to give back what He will; but we do make our vow to this special end, that we may have the love of God. We give ourselves in perfect confidence to Him, we trust ourselves to Him. If we give up all, we receive All. We give the all of earth, for the All of Heaven.

God enriches the soul with His own Wisdom: "In the love of God, we are to love God," says St. Augustine. He gathers us into His Divine Life, we grow more and more into it, and we can never come to the end of His gifts. The vow lifts the soul into a new life, and the brightness of it so out-

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shadows the other, that to us it looks, as it is, in shadow and darkness.

We make our vow to, and in union with, Jesus Christ, our Spouse and our Life. As His life was an entire holocaust to the Father, so we are offered up in union with Him, in union with the sacrificial life of our dear Lord.

There are some objections made to a vow. One is, why cannot you do the same thing without a vow? There is more merit in a vow, as it is made in obedience. He who gives the fruit of a tree year by year, gives a good gift; but when he gives up the tree itself, and the right to the fruit, he gives up more.

Another objection. Is it not more noble to give yourself day by day to God? Does not the vow become formal? The same argument applies to all vows, a priest's vows, the marriage vows.

We should lose strength if we did not take a vow, for it is a means of grace to us. Of course there is danger, but there is danger in everything. Indeed, the vow is the glory of the Religious state. The Religious has given herself and her all to God. We should renew our vows with increased fervour and devotion to our Lord.

11TH INSTRUCTION. — THE VOW OF POVERTY

Our life is dedicated in three ways: Poverty, Chastity, Obedience.

Poverty. By it we renounce the right of possess-

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ing anything of our own. The motive must be love of our Blessed Lord. We do not practise poverty in the spirit of an ascetic who wishes to see how much he can endure, like the Stoics. We do not follow our Lord simply because He suffered and we love to suffer with Him. It was once asked of St. Francis de Sales, "Why does he love poverty so?" "It must be because he so loves our Blessed Lord."

As with those we love we would rather be with them and suffer, than be separated from them. Love leads us to seek to share our Lord's suffering in His poverty, and we are thus united more fully to Him. Looking at the philosophy of it, if I may say so, the Church always differs from the world. The Religious Life presents this life of poverty to us as an aim, but the world cannot understand it. The world seeks money, strives to gain possessions; but we seek to be rid of all things, to possess nothing. By the Vow of Poverty we renounce the possessions that belong to the artificial state of society, which exists since the Fall. In Eden there were no particular possessions. This desire of fraternity and community is seen in the heart of man; see some of the sects in the world; but such things cannot be carried out in the world socially, but hereafter it will be in Heaven; in God, we shall all have all things.

The Vow of Poverty then takes us out of the artificial system of the world, into the supernatural dependence of a life of faith. It is a life of blessedness because the life of dependence on God is developed, Who will provide for His own.

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Poverty is commended by our Blessed Lord. St. Peter says, "Have we not left all," etc. It has been commended with the emphasis of a present reward. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." The other Beatitudes seem to have a future reward. Poverty is the very foundation of sanctity; it has been called "the Spouse of Christ." It is a present possession; if we are poor in spirit, we possess the Kingdom of Heaven now. That is, we enter into the realization of Him and His glory, more and more. By it we know now more fully the treasures of Heaven; as it frees us from the distractions of earthly things we put aside all care and anxiety, and rest more upon Him, leaving Him to provide and do with us as He will. The soul gives itself up to God in the consciousness of its own nothingness, yet it is given as an offering to God, and thus it enters more and more into God.

By Baptism we are all admitted into the Kingdom of God, and are His children; but Poverty takes us on, and shews us more and more of His love.

Again, we look at Poverty as manifested by our Blessed Lord Himself, and thereby sanctified and elevated into a condition of moral supremacy over earthly things, and made a power because He Himself used it and adopted it. Many had been living in poverty before our Lord came, but it was a state of death rather than of life; but since He has used it, it is the state in which one can most live to God, for we are then more like Him, and to

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be like Him must be a source of blessing to every heart that loves. As we come nearer and nearer to Him, we have more of His spirit. We are many times mistaken in our view of poverty. We think we may bear it, or endure it in order to be brought into union with Him; but it is more than that, it is a spiritual power; it was in His life, and will be in ours.

It has been asked, "What could not Christ have done, if He had had great possessions?" But wealth would never have been the power in Christ's life that His poverty was, and is. He might have relieved distress, but He would have left humanity just where it was. It was a power to attract men to Himself, a power of sympathy, a power because done in obedience, and was blessed by God. He was stripped of everything in His poverty; poor in His birth, His home, His clothes, in His death, and yet what a blessing to all. He was entirely dependent on God. By union with Him we gain His own benediction, and His wealth is ours. Our hearts are regulated by the impulses of His heart. The Spouse of Christ enters into that Heart, empties herself into it, that she may be filled with His power.

Poverty must be treated of in two ways, as exterior, and as internal. It must be internal first of all. Always work from the inner life outward.

Internal poverty lies in three things:

1st. The mortification of desire for possession.

2d. The detachment of the heart.

3d. The love of poverty as a means of union.

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External poverty must be according to our Rule, and the spirit of our Institute. There are various degrees of external poverty.

1. Receive nothing without the knowledge of the Superior.

2. Keep nothing contrary to her intention.

3. Dispose of nothing without permission.

4. Avoid incurring needless expenses; avoid superfluities for one's self.

5. Be content with what is provided.

6. Bear with meekness the privations attached to our estate. As Religious we embrace poverty, but we should think nothing of what we have done; it is but little at the most. Think of the wretchedness about us, and see how little we know of it personally. But we do embrace a voluntary life of poverty for His sake. We must be careful to avoid pride, for our offering is very small, but very dear to Him, if done for love of Him. He does not look at what we do, but the motive with which we do it.

12TH INSTRUCTION. — THE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF POVERTY

There are different degrees of Religious Poverty. We may look at, and consider, the different degrees, even if we are not called to carry them all out, as some of the Saints have done. Our poverty is according to our Rule, and the spirit of our Society.

1st. Not having anything of our own. We own

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nothing. Books, clothing, and indeed everything, given up, and we receive what is necessary from our Superiors. Do not use the word *my*. Scratch it from your vocabularies; all things belong to the Community.

2d. Do not set the affections on anything. Voluntary poverty is not to show itself in the original choice only, but also in the continued action of the will not to let our affections be settled on any one thing. Look at all things as confided to us, and check all desires, mortifying them.

3d. We are not to desire anything for our Society; it has been the cause of decay in Religious Houses; "Transplanted worldliness," as Fr. Benson calls it. This is a more subtle temptation. We think, "how much good we might do if only we had this and that, etc." Keep such desires in check, and use what God gives us. As in grace, we have it given to us as we need it. It is a part of our poverty, to be willing to work with fewer conveniences than we like.

4th. Be content willingly to forego all superfluities. It stimulates us when we think how many men in the world around us not only give up luxuries but suffer privations for years, that they may at last accumulate wealth, gain a position, earthly distinction. Do not fill our Houses with ornaments, or adorn our cells; have only a Crucifix, and some picture. Do not make our cells look like a drawing room. The Blessed Virgin must have had great taste, and yet but little opportunity of gratifying it;

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and the lack of harmony in His surroundings must have been a constant means of wounding our Lord, with His perfect organization.

It is not well to have the House gloomy. In the halls and Chapel have devotional pictures. Let the House be bright and cheerful, especially for those who go out to scenes of suffering and death. A contemplative Order does not require ornament; a commanding view is sufficient. Each Institution must be legislated for, by itself.

5th. We are not to be eager about necessaries. In the Religious Life we have to endure a certain amount of hardness and sometimes have to be without what seem to be necessaries, yet we are not to grumble, but offer the deprivation to God. Have no rule which will affect health injuriously; yet when by God's Will there comes a severe strain, then for His sake bear it joyfully. If one needs anything, one is bound to make it known; but if it is not to be had, then do without it for His sake, and willingly.

The Saints rejoiced to bear sufferings, and to do without necessaries for His sake, and learned to praise Him all the more for it. We, by circumstances, are hemmed in; by our life of civilization, etc. It would keep us from doing as they did; yet as we rise from the material let us strive to gain the spiritual power growing out of a life of sacrifice. The sick, too, may learn to rejoice in the loss of necessary things. When the body is weak, be glad to endure in Christ's strength. Sickness is apt to

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wear away the fervour and strictness of the Religious Life, but our spiritual strength must not give out with our physical strength; indeed, we then have opportunities for greater struggles with ourselves. We are not then "laid by"; our work then is as real and true a work as that of the healthy and strong, if only done in Him.

We stand on the brink of the supernatural and fear to take the leap; but if we will only plunge bravely in, we shall find that it sustains and encourages us, with Christ's own Power. Then, too, we wish to get this power before we let the world go, but we cannot hold on to both. Give up the world unconditionally and unhesitatingly, and then shall we know the grace of a life of true and voluntary poverty undertaken for Christ's sake.

13TH INSTRUCTION. — SPIRITUAL SIDE OF POVERTY

Besides the loss of external things, we must have the internal spirit of poverty. We are called to be poor like our Lord, out of a spirit of love. Enter into His own joy in the little things of poverty, and learn to find sweetness in it. "I will have nothing He did not have." If I am really to be poor, interiorly, I must be like the poor — be despised.

I. It brings the loss of honour. We must lose that which we would otherwise gain, even in doing good works. We might do them for God and take praise for it. When praise comes we are not to

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hold it for our own, but let it pass back, through us, to Him. When we have done anything well and are praised for it, look quickly to Him, to see His approval, His smile. "We thank Thee, dear Lord, and do everything in Thy Name and for Thee." It would be a dreadful thing to get our reward here. We must see if we are looking for praise, expecting it, and are sad and depressed if we do not have it. "I am not going to take earthly reward." The soul is to find her joy in the love of her Lord.

II. A poor man gets no honour; he is very apt to be looked down upon. Poverty is looked down upon, and the Religious Life will bring upon us a certain amount of contempt. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, Church people and even pious people, will look down upon us. That is part of what we have to bear. "The good and the good fight harder together than the good and the evil." They will look down upon the life and despise it. Our Blessed Lord was despised because He was the son of a carpenter. His companions were poor fishermen. He was despised for His want of position.

So the world calls us enthusiastic, foolish, etc.

The Church may look down upon the Religious Life; it is part of our vow of Poverty, it is like our dear Lord; so instead of being annoyed and vexed, we may learn at last to find some comfort in it, because it unites us to Him.

There have been times when poverty was not despised, but was rather much praised. That

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would be no true poverty which was embraced to gain the world's praise, like giving up our property as an act of philanthropy.

III. It will bring upon us a certain amount of contempt for our dear Lord's sake. A poor man is often unable to defend himself as a rich man can. Wealth can furnish many advocates. The rich man has all the resources skilful advocacy can bring. And so in the Religious Life, we cannot defend ourselves. We must be poor in that spirit, in a certain way. We cannot defend ourselves when we are attacked. When we suffer, when our good name is taken from us, etc., how much better to bear it in silence in union with our Blessed Lord. If we had a love of humiliations, we should rejoice when we are slighted or spoken against. We must not defend ourselves, but find a joy in resting in the Bosom of God. It would do no good to retire from the world, unless we retire into the Heart of God, the Being of God.

IV. The poor man is very soon forgotten. In poverty we are soon put aside and forgotten. In our Community, as individuals, we become unknown. In great buildings the workmen are unknown, so we must be unknown in building up our Community. We must act in simple, hidden ways, unknown to men, known to God. We are introduced into a holy condition where we are hidden in our Community. We must look to be often set aside, we only help to carry on a work. Nothing is more beautiful than to see one who has been in high position,

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perhaps Superior, take a low one; we must consider what is best for the interests of the Community, what is God's Will, and give it up with joy.

V. Riches give men certain advantages in spiritual things; minor ones, to be sure. The rich man can live where he chooses, put his house near the Church where he wishes to worship; or live at a distance and have a carriage to convey him to the Church. He can build a Church, have a Church in his own house, etc.

But a poor man must live where he can get work; it may be in a place where there is no Church. He is deprived of many spiritual privileges. So will this apply to Religious. You may be nursing, teaching, far away, where you cannot have the daily services, but it is a part of our poverty.

Our Lord was driven out of the Holy Land into Egypt. The Holy Family learned detachment in Egypt but they had Jesus with them, and so may we have Him in our heart. We do not come to the Religious Life to have more religious privileges, but to be united to our Blessed Lord; united to Him in a special way, and by special means; every trial will be a means of uniting us to our Lord, our Spouse; He felt trials, so do we.

We by our poverty also cannot have such services or Churches as rich men have; all services in our sanctuaries must be offerings to our Blessed Lord. Our poverty must be real, we must seek to grow in the interior spirit of poverty, in union with our Lord. A poor man must work for his master, as

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his master wishes, so we must work for our Master, our Spouse. Always work for His interests, and for what is best for the Community.

There are two ways in which we must specially seek to grow.

1. To grow in intense devotion to our Lord. Let it be a personal union with a personal Lord. Be gathered into His own life, growing day by day by interior acts, offering little things to Him; putting down phases of feeling. Every pain, every interruption, every sacrifice, is only a way of uniting us more and more to Him.

2. Community Spirit. Cast out everything opposed to it; esteem others better than ourselves; be of one heart and one mind; the work will take care of itself.

14TH INSTRUCTION. — CHASTITY I

Let us consider some of its excellencies. By poverty we give up external things, and also internal things. It has been said, that by Chastity we give up our own bodies, our own wills; by Poverty, we acknowledge our nothingness, but that is not all.

By chastity we cleave to God. By poverty, too, we cleave to God, by a common sympathy. Poverty unites us to our Lord by —

1. A community of want.
2. Detachment from creatures.
3. Sympathy, from common destitution.

Chastity unites us to our dear Lord by the one-

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ness of our entire oblation of being, along with His own, to the glory of God and to Himself as God, and the Spouse of our soul. It is not a mere state of negation, or apathy, or want, but a cleavage of the soul to Him in His own act of consecration. In poverty we share with Him, in His sympathy, a common suffering, trying together, bearing together: "Ye are they who have been with Me in My sufferings, etc." Chastity takes us into union with our Lord's own soul. We are conscious of a thrilling joy at being possessed by Him, and we willingly offer up our souls a complete holocaust, in the joy of being united to Him. This virtue was unrecognized till the coming of our blessed Lord. The Jew and the heathen knew not of it. It has been said that the heart could not be entirely given to God, without bringing God down. The Blessed Virgin was the first to know she had given her life, in a vow, to God; she realized the meaning of the prophecy in Isaiah, as her answer to the Angel shows, and God accepted her love, and to her He came. Since then He has ever been the object of intense love, and drawn man, in his defilement, into the glory of the life of God. Let us consider some of the particular excellencies of Chastity.

1. It prepares the soul to receive many virtues; it tends to make the soul fruitful in grace. When the soul is undisturbed by the emotions of mere nature, it is taken into the contemplation of God and becomes conformed to His Will. Chastity is the mother of many excellencies.

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2. It keeps out many sins, even as in poverty; if one thing is driven out, many evils are driven out with it. The eye of the conscience is more and more illuminated and the whole moral being is strengthened.

3. Chastity is attended by many virtues. She is a queen with many maids of honour in her train. Many virtues must be habitually exercised to attain her. She remains no indolent inmate, but is preserved by much activity. She maintains and defends her home by constant warfare. She is the strength of the weak, and of those who have overcome many temptations. She brings with her, humility, meekness, watchfulness, prayer and bodily mortification; these are her handmaidens. The soul cannot open to her, and not give a home to all her retinue; it is so excellent.

4. It brings into the soul manifold gifts from our Blessed Lord. He hearkens to the soul offering to Him the virtue He loves, and to such the mysteries of God are revealed. He would have us be His, and His only; He hears our cries. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." God watches over such as the apple of His Eye, on them He delights to pour out His graces. The soul is to be His in the embrace of life hereafter, and He loves to expend His grace in the purification and adornment of His Bride; as Esther was prepared before entering the King's Court. All things are placed at her disposal; she parts with all, that she may have all; she wants no earthly gift, that so she may have Him

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Who is her soul's Treasure. He adorns the soul He loves with the graces and merits which He won. It is an honourable stimulus in earthly life to give of one's triumph to those loved best. How much greater, then, His love, the true Knight, the Prince, the King of Kings. He wrestled here with the powers of darkness, and stormed the gates of heaven for love of us, to bestow His graces upon us.

5. Chastity raises the soul to Him to whom it is espoused. Blessed is the soul that is given up to the contemplation of Jesus, the love of Jesus, and nothing else. He is not espoused for His gifts, or His wealth, but for Himself, with no mercenary motive; not even because we desire our own salvation, merely; but being already saved or redeemed, we catch sight of the beauty of the Divine Life, that shines out in the glorified humanity of our Lord. His life shines through humanity, and in humanity He acts out His divine life. In humanity we see the wisdom, love, beauty, etc., of God not as substances or material things, but as actions. And the soul sees this beauty as it gazes on its Lord, and she cannot gaze on it without catching something of His likeness.

5. Chastity fills the soul with delight. The soul learns to deal with manifold temptations, by virtue of this vow, and to rest through them all in the power of Jesus. Every vow involves us in warfare. When we come to carry it out, we see how great, how many things are involved. It is to purify our hearts of earthly motives and tendencies. We come to

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mortify our affections, and it does involve many trials, but He is with us.

"So they two went on together,
So they two won many a field;
If He for us, who against us?
If He succour, who can yield?"

The soul rests in the power of her Lord, and herein is her delight. She lives not by her own struggles, her past attainments, but knows underlying is the power of her dear Lord. He puts hand to hand, heart to heart, will to will. The soul is trained little by little, as she feels her own weakness, her own insufficiency. Under His moulding hand, the soul is made anew, and every manifestation of His Power, in conquering temptation or otherwise, gives her delight. She says, "It is my Lord." "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." He is pledged to me by the verity of His own Life within me. "My Beloved is mine," and the soul desires nothing more. In my littleness and weakness, I am His.

15TH INSTRUCTION. — CHASTITY II

What the vow of chastity involves. It binds the soul to her Lord in a special way; she becomes Christ's bride; she finds her duties typified for her in those of a wife towards her husband.

1. It involves dedication of our being and faculties to Him, body and soul. There are different degrees of this virtue. It is given to different Orders to illustrate each a special virtue, and it is thus also given to different individuals; each soul is taught of

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God. This dedication of ourselves, both body and soul, leads us to think that this vow compels us to give our mental powers, as well as physical and moral, to our Blessed Lord. If we strive to cultivate intellect, or any power or gift, place it under this head; we must not be only trying to improve ourselves as people in the world, but as a part of our dedication to Him. If a woman is raised from a common position in life by marriage, she at once seeks to fit herself to fill the higher one. This is what we are doing when we cultivate any gift, etc. Do everything to fit ourselves more and more to be His brides; see that everything is brought into subjection to this Rule of Life, to be conformed to Him and His purposes. This requires discipline; then mortification and discipline will come under this head, and are, we see, connected with this vow. A Religious takes especial care of her body as well as her soul; is very particular about everything relating in any way to "Modestia"; guardianship of the senses; the eyes, for instance, not gazing everywhere; subjecting this sense, and all others.

Controlled in gait and postures, never lounging; never using violent demonstrations or exclamations; no loud talking or laughing. To do this involves a struggle. This special purity, and "angelic purity," are far different. Angels are differently constituted. Our natures are composite; we glorify God by subduing the material within us to the spiritual. This the Angels cannot do, for they have no material in their natures.

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Our offering is the result of a struggle and final victory; it has a special victory of its own. The Angels give of their given gift. Consider the glory of chastity in the other world. All our faculties will there be spiritualized and find their delight in spiritual objects. By this struggle and by our poverty, by the triumph wrought out in us by our Blessed Lord, we are prepared to delight in the revelation that is to come. The minutia of discipline in the Religious Life is not merely to keep back evil tendencies, but that the faculties may expand to everlasting beauty, and the fuller reception of the joys of our Lord.

2. We must give up our affections to our Lord Jesus. Learn to rest on Christ in entire love; give up the whole soul and not divide it between Him and the world, just as a wife must centre her affections undividedly on her husband, so that the love of those nearest and dearest is as nothing, compared with His love. So the soul strives after a purified heart and detachment from all creatures and earthly love, and trains her affections to Him.

Detachment. Be watchful not to grow in liking any particular person. Always cultivate a certain reserve about familiarities in expressions, closeness of intimacies, etc., all over-anxious remembrances of persons, gifts and tokens, etc. When once separated, be not over-anxious for meeting again; no jealousies in the heart. Give this love to our Lord, by converse with Him, by constant listening to His inspirations, seeking to enter into His own life, thus

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reposing on His Heart like St. John on Christ's Bosom. Not simply as one weary and wanting rest, but as listening to the beating of that Sacred Heart which is beating for us; every throb for us, every utterance one of love. The soul is thus intent upon the stirrings of that Divine Life which He is giving to her, and this not only when we come to His feet as sinners. When we listen to this inmost stirring, the soul develops in this union of affection; not only believes He is Divine, taking it in intellectually, but studies Him so closely, lovingly, and reverently, that we see the Divine life shining out in His actions. As a part of our faith we know He is God, and recognize it in His miracles, etc., but let us strive to study Him so closely that we may see it in His most ordinary actions, etc. In the least expression we must see shining forth the Life of God. See the inner meaning of all His life and know His motives, and study His life that we may fully appreciate it. Place the ear of the soul right close to His dear Heart, and listen to the stirrings within, and thus train our affections to Him. He says, "The Son doeth nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do." Let us, then, do only that which we see our Lord do.

3. Our life must be fruitful by reason of our espousals. The power of Christ upon the soul devoted to Him, gives it a supernatural fruitfulness. Fruit is the result of our union and gives us a power for action far beyond our own nature. Our union is from love, suffering, and contemplation. "We

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will share all the worse of earth, for all the better of heaven," as His spouse. It is only by this union that we do become fruitful. When our own nature mingles in our work we spoil it; our own quicksilver ruins the gold of His Life in us.

Purity, to see God. See Him, to do His work. Seeing His works, see Him. In the power that gives, bring fruit for Him; do nothing in our own natural power, but everything in and by His power. Be diligent in our work to work for love of Christ, and let His love work in us. In order that He may do His work in us, we must live tranquilly, resting in His love alone. Strive to live tranquilly in Him. Nature is quick, restless, impulsive, and given to her own desires. Grace is slow and tranquil, and in this way does He bring forth His works in us. When we are full of energy, etc., in our own power, it drowns His Grace and it cannot work.

Gain tranquillity by two things. Externally: by going slowly and quietly. Spiritually: "cast your care upon Him."

Anxieties and troubles come. What shall we do with them? Not only ask Him to help us bear them, but try to bear them along with Him for love of Him. So shall we grow in the knowledge and love of Him. Be simply passive in this union, and do not ruin the work by our own misguided zeal.

16TH INSTRUCTION.— CHASTITY III

We have considered Chastity in itself, and its special excellencies. Under the light of what it

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pledges us to, it is threefold: 1. Entire dedication of our bodies. 2. Union of our Soul with that of our Lord. 3. Fruitfulness.

Tonight we will consider the means of training this love within ourselves, our affections, our thoughts, our time.

The training of our affections toward our Blessed Lord. How shall we who are specially dedicated to Him grow in the love we seek?

1. *Consideration of the Person who loves us.* Bring it before us very, very frequently. Use personal pronouns; our own dear Lord as the Master and Spouse of the soul. He loves *me*. His love is special, not general; it was based upon a predestinated purpose; there is some particular niche He would have us fill; it is a particular love, not extending to thy gifts, but thee.

2. *Who is it He loves?* Never let it pass away from us that we are sinners; have often done as He would not wish us to do. Our spiritual life must be grounded upon great humility. Keep in mind our own special failings, not simply our sinfulness. He has taken us for better and for worse. Make acts of gratitude and penitence, and thus will come the truer love. The soul has been raised from a low estate to One she loves.

3. *How long he Has loved me!* Any Christian may say, He has loved me from all eternity: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." But a Religious may take it to herself, may think of her years in the Religious Life, and see how long He has

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loved her, and how constantly, in spite of her failures.

4. *To what extent he has loved me!* How He has lavished upon us the creative powers of His own Divine Mind as a man. Died for me as a Christian. As a Religious He has called me and sought me out, united me to His own work; not like a mere child, but has taken me into Himself, into His own trials, temptations, and to a certain extent His Passion.

5. *Characteristics of His love.* It has been marked all through with unselfishness, patience, tenderness.

6. *For what does He love me?* I can bring Him nothing, cannot serve Him as Angels do, am not necessary to Him in any way. In meditation, let the thought come often before you, of your own Lord's patience. Put Him before you in the special attitude of one betrothed, and you will see His Life shining out in your soul. If we bring our heart in meditation close to our Blessed Lord, it will burn with the love of His Heart, personal union and affection growing deeper and deeper. That will bring us into effective love.

But we must also grow in effective love. But that will not come by meditation, but by action. Love is an active quality and must express itself in deed. Not that we merely imitate Him, but surrender ourselves to Him, that He may be reproduced in us; we yield ourselves to Him, and are taken into His own hidden life, His public life, His suffering and glorified life. He gathers a soul into His own life, that she may share it with Him. This is the way

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in which He deals with the Church as a whole, and with Religious. This is the secret of Church History.

Not only in a great and general way, but in a particular way He gathers souls into Himself. The action of His entire oblation should extend itself through us that thus we may be extensions of His life, and that it may go out to others. When we labour, teach, minister to the sick and the poor, He does it through us. He is thus reproducing His own life in us, and gathering us into His own Heart, and thus teaching us the motives of His inner life, and the struggles of His Soul; how He was sustained by the action of the Spirit. Your labours were His, your suffering His; your temptation and poverty were His; a perfect understanding and sympathy. This union of soul is to be eternal. You must know your Lord, your Master, your Husband. Mark the difference between souls who merely imitate Him, and yourselves, who are gathered into His very Life. He does it by His own Holy Spirit; not as if when you were doing certain things, as working, nursing, teaching, you thought of Him, but He gives you the same Spirit that was in His Soul, as He lay in His Mother's arms; when He looked with sorrow, or love. We do not know Him by thinking about Him, but by the Spirit, we know His interior life. We know Him and become more like Him. This is effective love.

There is a degree of love called passive lov^, which means suffering love. Our affections want to be

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trained to make us like Him, He being the mould of our life, into which we are poured and remoulded; but they want to unite us in a more mystical sense, and that is by suffering passive love, the love that is only satisfied by suffering. Suffering is the highest expression of love. To share anything with another is love, but to suffer for another is higher and greater. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." After He had exhausted all His acts of kindness, love, etc., He died on the Cross for love. He could only express His love by pain, which is more eloquent than words. Pain is the most intense expression of love. As we look at the Cross we see the utterance of Divine Love. His Heart must break, for His intense love for us. You catch sight of His love for you, and you long to return that love. The soul must learn a language like His own, therefore it must suffer. The Bride would be like her Spouse. Love for love. Life for Life. You bear a trouble for Him, but not in the way of a hardship, or a trial, with mere resignation; that is a blessed act, but to coöperate with Divine grace, is more blessed still; to bear it because it is His will; to seek thus an opportunity to express our love; so thus to learn His own language as the little child looks up into its mother's face, and tries to understand her words, though it does not fully know their meaning, tries to lisp back an answer. Thus we learn how to suffer, and how to love, and to find sweetness and joy therein. Within our Religious House there are many

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trials; it would be unreal without them; they are only opportunities by which we may learn to grow into His Life; we are to expect many in the Religious Life, they are what make it so blessed. We are called to be united to our Lord through special trial, and not merely through the Sacraments. He puts His own chalice to our lips, and gives of it to all His loved ones.

We love to suffer for Jesus' sake in little things, internal or external. We must use all worries, all interruptions, all difficulties, misunderstandings, anything that pierces the heart, as something to offer up to our Lord; it is a blessed work. There have been those who must suffer, and have said, "I must suffer or I die!" We may be called to suffer physical, mental, or moral trials. He leads us on as we are able to bear; we are trying humbly to put before us the idea of the life, and how all suffering may be turned to good account. This love is the energetic principle within us. If we love Him, it will go out through us to others. We do not know how to love, till we love Jesus, till we love all in Him; and it outshines mere natural affection, it will overpower all dislikes, and unite us to one another, as it is the cementing power to our Spouse.

17TH INSTRUCTION. — THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

We might well hail this vow as the greatest of them all. Poverty is the surrender of all our wealth and outward possessions. Chastity is the surrender

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of our bodies and all our affections. Obedience, is the dedication of our entire will to God. It is indeed the essence of the Religious Life. In some Orders they take but one vow, and that is obedience for it includes all. There are those in the world who are living in a state of poverty, and in that respect may far exceed us; others, too, in a state of chastity; but obedience is the special glory of the Religious Life. The world has its own hard slavery, but the Religious Life rejoices in its entire surrender. By it every act is capable of being raised to its highest perfection. By it, Simon the obedient, the hasty, became Simon the rock. It becomes the discipline of our life.

I. It is needful. As a discipline of the will, as a remedy against pride. Pride shows itself in two ways:

1. In the mind: by thinking too much of ourselves.

2. In the will: by asserting ourselves. Man seeks to be independent in himself, and independent of the will of God. St. Anselm says, "Man is the source of all evil; God, of all good." This obedience comes in to discipline our proud, self-asserting wills, and is not only necessary to us as Christians, but most especially as Religious. We come specially to this life to do battle within ourselves for our dear Lord's sake. We do not come to be free from temptations but to struggle with them, and by conquering in the struggle, to become holier. As Religious, then, our great and special danger is, disobedience. Cassian says, "The devil seeks to overthrow youth

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by intemperance, the world, by honours, but Religious, by disobedience."

As Religious we need obedience as a remedy against a strong will; it cannot be too strongly put before us. St. Francis de Sales in founding his Order of the Visitation, specially dwelt on obedience. It is necessary, then, from our nature, our calling, and also from the spirit of the age in which we live. Now there is so much independence and self-assertion everywhere; let us seek to set forth more especially the virtue of obedience. Men say in their heart, "I will have my way," and it generally ends in the devil having his way in them. When one gives up his will to God, it is God victorious in Him.

St. Augustine says, "To obey is to reign." Other Religious Houses may surpass us in austerity, in poverty, etc., but let us rise up to obedience and exemplify it in its highest sense. So much for the necessity of it. Let us make it our greatest glory.

II. It is the strength of moral character. By it the soul is taken out of its own vacillation, and taken into the Divine power out of its own weakness. By it the smallest acts become virtues; the greatest, without it, are worthless. "Obedience is better than sacrifice." One who is living as a hermit may not be obedient, because he is living out his own way. A man may practice austerities through self-will or practice devotions through self-will; it is a test of devotion, if one is willing to give them up. One may be kind and thoughtful in doing things for

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others, but thinks it hard if she does not receive thanks. Do all in a spirit of obedience.

Our growth in spiritual things depends upon our obedience to a law. Law has a seat in the bosom of God; "it is the harmony of all creation." (Hooker.) The foundation of a child's life is, "Honour thy father and thy mother." If we do not fast in obedience, it does us no good. St. Bridget says, "If you give up anything in your rule because you are ill, you gain a twofold blessing."

You give up your will to keep your Rule, and you give it up again in not keeping it, in obedience. We are taken out of the changeableness of natural life, to the unchangeableness of the supernatural life.

III. It is the perfection of the Community. It is that which binds us together, as it binds families it binds us to our Community. By it the talents are bound together. All have different talents. We are like an army going forth to battle. We must work together, to gain joint action and win the battle. Our gifts are brought together to be brought into action, and support one another. In the army, they employ physical force; but we, intellectual and physical too. Perfection is a gift of the Holy Ghost. The army is banded together by force and moved by the will of the General; but there is no gift of God. A family acts together, but it is from nature. Union gives strength. One who was not a Christian once said, "If ten men were bound together for one object, they could move the world."

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We, as Religious, are not brought together from natural affection and ties, but in obedience to the call of God. The power that enables us to stay among many so different in gifts, disposition and age, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The world does not understand it, not knowing the power of the Holy Spirit, which flows down and binds us together; it is a spirit of love. We do not obey as a mechanic who is summoned by a bell; or as a soldier who hears an order; or from interest in one another; but the Holy Ghost speaks, and where He is, is love, and this makes our obedience to shine with a special beauty. We cannot give up our will easily, except through love; love makes it easy. The will is the hardest thing to give up. Where you see obedience carried out, there is the Holy Ghost; it is the strength of the Community and its perfection. Strength gives it power to do its work, but the Holy Spirit is to shine through all, to give it a special beauty and grace.

There are different degrees of obedience. They are threefold.

1. Doing the thing commanded by the Rule, or the voice of the Superior. If I fail in that, I am breaking my vow. St. Bernard says, "It is a great sacrilege to resume power over one's will, which has once been given up to God." One help in obeying Rule is to remember, when one gets into a difficulty in obedience, what St. Bernard said. "Bernard, why did you come here? You came to give up your will to God, to be united to God."

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2. Submission of the will. Obey without questioning, without complaining, not trying to get things altered to your way, not using policy, etc. Act up to the spirit as well as the letter.

3. Submission of our judgment, and bringing it into harmony with those set over us.

Make a distinction between things that are important, and those that are not. The Creed, our rule of faith, is important, but most other things are unimportant. Through the Rule and the will of the Superior, we want to look up and see the will of our dear Lord. The work we do is secondary. "This is His Will, that I am to do this." We are to be united to Him in special ways, and by special acts.

18TH INSTRUCTION. — OBJECT OF THE VOWS

It is self-abnegation. The Son of God emptied Himself and took upon Him our nature, that it might be perfected in Him. We must empty ourselves of ourselves, of our sins, our motives, our earthly thoughts, which come between us and God.

The vow of poverty empties us of this world's wealth and power. We are not to seek or rely on them; we trust in God; the ravens will come and feed us; we are not to seek wealth in any way, even in little things. When we rely on the world's power, we begin to fail; we shall learn to feel joy at having nothing when we are filled with the power of God.

The vow of Chastity empties us of earthly affections. The Religious Life is the school of our affec-

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tions. No work, no school, no place must claim us; we are not to be held by anything about us; we are to be in the world, but not of it; not to rest in any human affection, or seek it in return, but be emptied of ourselves that we may be filled with the joy of God; Jesus our only love.

By the vow of obedience we are emptied of this world's judgment; we renounce our own judgment, our own ways of thinking and doing. We give up our will to the Superiors God has given us, looking through them to see the Will of God, thus becoming conformed to the Mind of God.

The three vows empty us of ourselves, and we become nothing. The object of the Religious Life is self-abnegation. A temptation may come to us and we may say of it, "Is not our spiritual life a very nothing?" That is what we want — to be nothing in our own sight, nothing in the sight of the world, or of others. One in a lowly condition, thinking nothing of himself, was raised to be the King of Israel. Put down all self-esteem, self-satisfaction, self-assertion. "Wherever you find self, leave self." "You cannot brush away self-consciousness, any more than you can brush away a fog, but do not think about yourself, leave self." Would that we could! Abandon self and hold self down to its own nothingness. I am nothing. Think of those who have gone before.

To leave all, are the words of Holy Scripture. Knowing our own nothingness in abandoning self-seeking in our lives, we rest more directly on our

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Blessed Lord Who is in us, trust more to Him, grow in the interior life to which we are called in Religion.

Some means by which we may see our own nothingness. It is to be made a subject of Meditation. We are formed out of nothing; God alone has substantial life. He alone is self-existent. By our regeneration we are made one substance with our Incarnate Lord, but nothing is ours, all is His. All we have, we receive from Him (all that is our own is our sin). My life is His, I am nothing. We can hold nothing, for nothing is ours. The heart cannot be satisfied with anything that is created, but it craves something substantial. Our spiritual life is not ours, it is a gift, we cannot claim it. We have sinned so much against grace we only remain in the Kingdom on sufferance. We live day by day because He allows it. As we grow into the light and life of God, we see our own nothingness. Our friends judge us partially, by affection and interest. We must not trust their judgment, or abide in it; it will soon fade away. The world's judgment is based upon superficialities; it is worth nothing, for it is not based on truth. "The fashion of this world passeth away." Again, that only which is wrought in the soul by the grace of God endures; earthly things pass away. Contrast thyself with those who have gone before; think of the blessed Saints, how they have served our Lord in obedience, the height of sanctity to which they have attained; they followed Him even unto death. Again, compare thyself with what God would have thee to be.

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He has His own ideal for me. Let me ask myself how have I carried on His work? How used His grace? In a way pleasing to Him? What is done to please Him lasts on forever. What am I, what have I? I find myself nothing at any judgment seat. He is the true substance, I am nothing.

For union with Christ, there must be first the emptying ourselves of ourselves; then, we must look into ourselves, and bring our vows to bear on our life, and grow in self-abnegation. Sometimes it is easy but not always. Give ourselves to God and let Him work through us. Consider our own nothingness; as we go in the spiritual life we shall feel it.

Empty ourselves of ourselves and be filled with God. Religious are called by the three vows to be emptied of themselves, to be filled with the spiritual life, the life of God. There are many ways in which we may seek to grow in the spiritual life, but this is the essence of it; be emptied of ourselves to let Christ come into us; go right to the centre, do not go round and round. Take the best and surest method of becoming what we are called to become; do not try superficial remedies in saying Offices, frequent communions, etc., but go right into self and put the knife to the heart. Religious are called to carry on the work of God in their own soul, and in no half-hearted way. The three vows help us to abase ourselves, to put the old Adam to death. In heaven it will be His Life shining out through us; there will be no envyings, no jealousies, we shall be glad and delighted to see anyone do His work. The

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works of nature please us, for they are His. All things will be ours. Now put down self-will, self-love, thwart self in every way; if the heart aches, let it; we must learn to suffer till we have put self to death; we know the end will be blessed. Do not be discouraged at a worry or trouble, struggle against it, and all forms of self, and be filled with God. He calls us to be His Spouses, to fill our soul with His own Life. His Life is to be really and truly our mould, as the flowers grow out of the stalk; not merely our imitating Him, but His living through us. To rule us — rule in our mind by the Holy Spirit; control our hopes, our fears, our joy.

As a bird sleeps on the ocean and rises and falls with the motion of the waves, so the heart should rest on God, and rise and fall with the impulses of the Divine Life.

19TH INSTRUCTION. — ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. SILENCE

Our life is so sheltered by Silence. It is a store-house of religious feelings, a safeguard against many evils, teaching of manifold mysteries. What a wonderful gift the gift of speech is, the difference between men and animals. Animals have highly developed vocal organs, but no speech like man, who is in the Image of God; they communicate by sound. Speech is a portion of the original outfit. God created all things by the word, and gave man the gift of speech that he might communicate with

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Him — that is its first and highest use, to utter to Him outwardly the inmost thoughts. Silence is helpful in preserving and directing the right use of speech. As Religious, it enters specially into our life, to preserve the faculties of the use of speech.

There are four kinds of silence, which we may associate with our Blessed Lord. In the Religious Life we seek a special union with our Blessed Lord, and silence is one means of union with Him in His own Life.

I. In His Infancy, a silence of time and place. See the Eternal Word bound in swaddling clothes lying in the manger, or in His Mother's arms carried to Egypt, and into the Temple. Notice the silence of the Eternal Word. Being God, of course He could have spoken, but He was true to the nature He had assumed. He was never to use His Divine Power to carry out His work. He was true to humanity. It was one of His temptations. He lived true to humanity, and fought out its battles, true to its conditions, by the Spirit given Him. His Infancy was a time for absolute silence. He could not speak, for he would have broken His Rule. Think of His temptation to speak, to overstep the restraint.

The Eternal Word knew the trials and dangers about His parents, Mary and Joseph. Why not speak and tell them of the massacre of the infants; or that the journey into Egypt would soon come to an end — they could bear it better.

But He was true to our nature in His Infancy in every way. Silence of time and place. When

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our silence hour comes, think that we are shut in with the silence of the Infant Jesus. We may be tempted to break it, through affection or some slight thing. The Eternal Word rested in the Father's will that He should be silent. He trusted God to take care of Mary and Joseph, it was not for Him. It may be necessary sometimes for us to break our silence, but be united to the silence of the Infant Jesus. It is necessary, too, in a Religious House to keep silence upon certain subjects.

II. In His public Life there was a moral silence. There are many things we do not care to talk of. Think of the difference there should be in the conversation of Religious and persons in the world. People in the world are taken up with the many foolish things about them, and those we have left behind. We must always strive to speak with reference to some good end, and show a reserve about worldly affairs; and when dealing with externs, there must be a reserve about the affairs of our House. They are not to be made known to others, there must be a spirit of silence about them. If any sister is too intimate with one out of the house, or constantly writing to her, making a confidante of her and seeking her sympathy, it is not right; we are to keep silence upon those things. We keep silence, of course, from criticisms upon one another. Where the spirit of criticism comes, it does so much harm. We may see other's faults, but pray for them, do not speak of them. "Let your complaints be made known unto God." All matters of Religious con-

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troversy are to be avoided; they are not becoming in Religious, or priests. Do not speak of religion argumentatively; in theology, avoid a controversial spirit, do not let it become contention. As Sisters, we have to speak to others. If we could conform our speech to His restraint, then we should unite ourselves to the power of His speech. Not many words, but a few spoken went home to the heart's life.

We are called to save souls. If, when teaching children and caring for the sick, we speak in His Name, we shall speak in His power.

III. In His Passion, heroic silence. Before the High Priest — before Pilate — His absolute silence before Herod. Think of His silence under accusation. Is it right for me to keep silence when falsely accused? If only oneself is concerned it may be; if the Church or others are implicated it may be right to speak. Think of His silence under personal contumely — when they put the bandage over His eyes, taunt Him, push Him about the room, spit in His face.

When we feel some little act done against us, some neglect or interference, we are all on fire. He felt His indignities. The feeling is not wrong. We could not be human, and in God's Image, and not feel. Indignation is justice making itself manifest. But, Oh, His wonderful self-control! He kept silence under reproofs, accusations, and also in the pain at the pillar. "As a lamb before his shearers is dumb, even so He opened not His mouth." How can we unite ourselves with Him in this heroic si-

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lence? When we are found fault with, think of His heroic silence in His Passion. He is silent, but His Heart waketh; silent towards man, but not towards God. Try in any pain or suffering to speak to God interiorly, not only saying nought, but saying, "I offer this to Thee, I bear this for Thee; I unite this to Thine own actions; gather me into Thyself."

IV. Mystical silence. Silence of our Lord as it is seen when His Body is lying in the Tomb. When the heart is busy within itself, it is not to shut ourselves in in self-gloom, but that we may commune with God; that is its end; the Body in the Tomb is the type. The tomb is a place of brightness and glorious light, a chamber filled with sweet perfumes where Angels dwell; this silence is within the soul. We should strive to hush questionings, complainings, doubtings, that go on in oneself. "Why talk of oneself? find a better companion!" Often the soul goes on upon its own troubles and gets cast down. How our spiritual life is wasted in thinking and talking of our wrongs, grievances, unforgivenesses, etc.

We are then unconsciously playing into the evil one's hands, and get more and more into a wrong state before God. We cannot always control our thoughts, or help thoughts coming into our mind; we cannot get rid of them by saying, Go. But we are thinking of what the life may become in its perfection; what we reach forward to attain, by God's grace. We may grow in mystical silence if

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we stop worrying about self. "Forget those things which are behind." When disagreeable thoughts come, say, "I have turned into a very disagreeable lane; I will go where the birds and flowers are." When despondent, think of God's many mercies; make a Te Deum of His goodness. It gives a vigour and brightness of mind and soul to make use of such practices.

The silence of the life entombed is full of brightness, life, and peace; the mind is open to our Blessed Lord. If we were to sit still at His Feet and do nothing, a virtue would go out from Him. We should know interiorly that if we wait, He will speak to our soul. In trial he gives that supernatural calmness. But the soul learns to be silent that it may catch the meaning of His inspirations, read His teachings, His utterances within. Our Lord gives us His Spirit, and the soul learns to be more trained by the least movement of the Holy Spirit, to grow more recollected.

The eagerness of nature drowns grace. Save any one utterance God gives us; treasure any little gift, it is the way to get more. The one crumb from His table will satisfy our thousand wants.

20TH INSTRUCTION. — SOME TEMPTATIONS AND SINS WHICH ARE INCIDENT TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

There are certain faults which belong to certain classes — to lawyers, merchants, etc. So in the

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Religious Life, in the way both of excess and defect. Aristotle brought out the idea that virtue was in the middle, between two extremes.

In distinction from people in the world, we are living under a Rule. Two faults may show themselves: 1. Contempt of Rule. 2. Scrupulosity.

1. A sister may neglect it; she does not study it, she errs in the way she regards it, does not look at it as God's voice to her, as regulating her work, etc., does not let herself be moulded by it. Some come into the Religious Life with ideas of their own as to the spiritual life, taking what part they like and leaving what they do not like, not taking it all lovingly as God's Voice to them.

2. One may become very scrupulous as to the application of it; may dwell very much on little things, to the exclusion of greater ones.

As regards our bodies and souls: (*a*) *The body.* As to one's health; imprudence on the one side, imagined weakness on the other; concealed illness. Some like to think themselves ill, seek dispensations, home comforts, etc. We are out on a campaign and must put up with great inconveniences. Concealing illness, going on and seeing how much one can do without giving up is wrong. One is bound to care for one's health; illness brings great care and trouble upon the Community. (It is very different when one may go out nursing, and take a fever.) We are to consider others in taking care of ourselves; it is better to tell the Superior when we are ill. Again: faults of manner. Secularity of manner,

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on the one hand, and religious affectation on the other.

We are not to try to be secular with seculars, in order to win them. It is a mistake to put on a manner which has ceased to be natural to you, or a tone of voice, or matter of conversation. Fault has been found with Religious Houses, where Religious have mixed with the world, and caught its manner. Avoid the world's ways, by quietness, and thought of our Lord's Presence. Religious affectation gives people in the world the impression that you consider yourself better than they are.

Religious are called to perfection, and the vows are means to that end. God calls people in the world to serve Him in one way, and Religious in another. If we were always living in God's presence, there would be a quiet, recollected manner about us; but avoid excess.

(*b*) *The soul.* Ambition to excel, or falling into routine. We come to the Religious Life to please our Blessed Lord. Any earthly ambition comes from pride, when we want to excel others in our spiritual advance. As it shows itself in the world, so it may come into Religious Houses. It may show itself by desiring to be looked up to.

Dropping into routine, is one of the worst things that can come into a Religious House. If we fall into dull routine how are we to rouse ourselves, if we get up, say Office, do our work, in a mechanical way? The sense of the supernatural fades away; we go on from past momentum, but get into a para-

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lyzed condition, from which it is most difficult to rouse ourselves. St. Bernard says, "it is a most difficult thing to convert a Priest or a Religious." Again: other faults. Restlessness, which leads on to secularity (restlessness of disposition) on one side, on the other, languor.

Some are naturally wanting in steadfastness; take things up and lay them down; have strong impulses, but are not fixed in purpose. This shows itself by their wanting to change their work, go from house to house. They do not go on quietly in their prayers, but want to change them. They are apt to go outside for comfort and sympathy and make friends with the world.

Languor is to give up and do nothing. Languor is not dryness, or being desolate; it is a spiritual fatigue; a desire to give up, but it does not give up; a feeling of disappointment with oneself, that advance has been so little. The danger is, giving up effort. How to deal with it? Sometimes a sharp mortification is the best thing after all. Again: Littleness of purpose; or, Over-estimation of our powers. It was said of one, that he would not do for the Religious Life, for he had not soil enough of character for anything to grow. There must be a certain amount of greatness of character to make a good Religious. The world says, "How narrow Religious are," but it is a mistake; they must have greatness of soul. We must be united to our dear Lord, and believe that He can do anything. If our heart and will are only purified, He can do what

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He wills in us; His word will not return to Him void.

Those who over-estimate themselves, show it by criticizing the society, its Rules, its way of doing things; they think they could fill an office so much better than another, etc.; they have no self-distrust. Again: We come into a Society. There may be a want of devotion to it; or, we may be humanly proud of it. There is a true love of our society because we believe it to be of God, a thing of Christ's forming; but we are humanly proud of it, when we speak boastingly of it, of what it has done. The danger is, we might rest in it, and not in our Lord. Also a danger that we might speak against other societies.

Desire of popularity is a very great snare. On the other hand, to say "I do not care for anyone; I go on my way, they may go on theirs" — being regardless of others—is wrong.

Again: Disquietude on account of others' faults, or neglect of their spiritual welfare. Seek to spread charity; pray for one another. Gain for one is gain for another; one cannot grow, without its being a gain to all. It must inspire us to grow in love of our Lord.

Again: Our dealing with those without. 1. We may desire favour of the great. We want to get on, and seek people of wealth, because they hold position and influence. A spirit of "transplanted worldliness" comes in. 2. The opposite fault would be rudeness, want of courtesy, gentleness, because

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they do not understand us, do not address us properly, etc.

Again: Faults within ourselves and towards those over us.

1. Obstinacy of opinion.
2. Not stating our opinion when asked.

These are all extremes. "Virtue lies in the middle way; who can hit it between these two!" It wants Christian common sense as made plain to us by our Blessed Lord. We shall learn only by many failures. Lean to the side which is fullest of devotion to our Blessed Lord; lean to that which leads to mortification and self-discipline; it is better to have excess in devotion, rather than be too light or careless; our Lord will cure those defects.

St. Peter fell after boasting He would not deny our Lord, but was restored upon his repentance. When St. James and St. John wanted to share our Lord's sufferings, He said, "Art thou able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of," etc. They say unto Him, "we are able." We are called into a supernatural life; let us cast ourselves on our Blessed Lord, and He will help us.

Spiritual Conditions found in the Religious State

In untechnical language, we may say there are two spiritual conditions which are found in the Religious State: I. The tired feeling. II. The feeling of rest.

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1. Of course all Christians have, more or less, feelings of disappointment, or fatigue, wearied with the constant battle against sin, etc., but a Religious has that, and also has to struggle against the very monotony of her life. This tired spirit! The fact that our life has so little change in it, does produce weariness; the soul is quite aware of it, going through the same thing over and over again.

Another cause. It comes sometimes because we have so much to do with sacred things. We have so much more opportunity than others for prayer, Communions, etc., that we become so familiar with them that there comes a feeling of fatigue in respect to them. Sometimes prayer seems a great burden; the recitation of our Office is very tiresome.

With this tired feeling comes sometimes also a growing irritability. In the world people become irritable; but with us it comes from friction growing out of being together; from our desire of perfection; the tight tension we draw makes us irritable if we give way to faults.

It also shows itself in low spirits. These show themselves in various ways; sometimes from physical causes; sometimes because we are impatient at a reproof; or, we find we have been failing more than usual, we have set ourselves to grow in a certain virtue, and find how far we are from it. It may take the form of murmuring against God, and finding fault if we are not professed; we may be tempted to give up our vocation; or, if professed, to settle down into a life of routine, to give up striving after perfection.

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These are phases of what may come to one in the spiritual life. One great remedy against it, always, is fidelity in little things. Rouse ourselves afresh day by day by some ejaculation, some fresh act, out of our own heart toward God.

Again: as to prayer: we may have got into slovenly habits, may expect too much of God; are not careful in our preparation before, and thankgivings after, our Communions; do not have a horror against venial sins. Against irritability, take refuge in silence; be very careful as to what we say in physical low spirits, make acts of thanksgiving to God, do not go and tell some one; make acts of submission to the Will of God, and let oneself alone; we are not to get our comfort from man, but from God. He knows what we may have to meet. He is very gentle and very patient. It is a hard battle He has called us to; our whole life is a mass of failures, and does cause fatigue. But, "never be discouraged with yourselves, for God is not discouraged with you." We may get into that feeling of fatigue after very great efforts of grace, that our Lord may shew us how little depends upon ourselves. A feeling of weakness, or darkness, comes over the soul. He wants to shew us He is to do all the work; it is one means of God's emptying a soul of itself; when the soul surrenders itself to God, He can do a work in it.

2. The other side, of rest.

The feeling of the soul knowing it is resting on the merits of Christ, in His love. Abandoning self, and embracing the merits of Christ, it learns to rest

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in Him; with Him nothing is impossible. My will is to labour, His, to give the increase. Rest on the power of Christ in temptation, let Him do His work within us. Something holds us back, either getting rid of the world, or, if rid of that, getting rid of self, of relying on self, of resting on self, instead of relying on our Lord and His Love. When assaulted by spiritual temptations, etc., think, "He loves me." Let His Love come into the soul, rest on His merits and His love. The soul becomes less disturbed by things around. Detachment leads the soul to rest in Him. If we are detached from creatures, we must be attached to God, willing to work anywhere, with anyone. As we grow in detachment, we are being united to our Blessed Lord's Will and learning to rest in Him, putting away all but His Will, and rising up into union with it. Things are easier when we are working inside, not outside, our Blessed Lord; when we make His Heart our home, our cell; when we look out from it, as through a lattice, onto the world around. Our motive is so much stronger. If we want to forgive anyone, we say, "I will forgive for Thy dear sake." When we have something hard to bear, we think, "He has some purpose in giving me this to bear." Seek His interests, what will be pleasing to Him, and all envy will be gone; if we seek to please Him, we enter into His joy. "What pleases Him, pleases me." Work inside, rather than out; it is so much easier in all troubles, in the Church, anywhere; be content that He should carry on His work in any way.

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When God gives the soul something, some comfort, some new light, gives peace to the soul which extends even to the body, and you feel interior consolation, though you may not be able to describe the feeling, it strengthens the whole interior being. You are glad because He is what He is. Beauty, Wisdom, Love itself; you rejoice because He gives it; you work from the inside. Practise acts of thankfulness for health, food, etc., because He gives them; pray that nothing outside of Him may be pleasant to us, that all that is irksome may be pleasant if done for Him. So if there is an interior motive, and union with Him, there is also rest and peace.

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A RELIGIOUS ORDER FOR MEN

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A BENEDICTINE ABBEY

There has been a growing desire in our Church for an order of laymen devoted to the service of Christ in Community life. There are many reasons for an adoption of the Benedictine Rule. It has been established now for thirteen hundred years. It was formed in the early times to which we Anglican Churchmen appeal. The Benedictine Rule was written before Roman errors had arisen and is consequently free from every trace of them, whether modern or mediæval. The new Community which has been formed under this Rule professes sincere loyalty to the true Catholic position and teaching of the Anglican Communion. It recognizes Episcopal authority and conducts all its work under Episcopal direction.

St. Benedict gave a Rule based on family life. The Abbot was the Father of the family. The members lived together under a common Rule of life adapted to the age and country in which they lived. In the comprehensive spirit of our Church there is room for such an order. We are in the midst of a forward movement among men. The Church is feeling the impetus of a great spiritual movement. The revival of the consecrated Religious Life in our

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Community is due to Dr. Pusey. He laid the foundation of the first Sisterhood in 1844. The members at first were few, but they had the prayers and guidance of a great saint. There are now, according to a statement made in the English Church Quarterly, 5000 Religious women in different societies and a hundred, and perhaps more, men. Many laymen among us are intensely desirous that our Church should regain its full Catholic heritage in doctrine and worship and be better known by the American people. A lay order can do very much to forward this glorious cause. The Church needs lay missionary helpers. There are not a few who, from a lack of trained scholarship, are not adapted to the Ministry but can do effectual missionary work. Sometimes a word from a layman goes farther than from the professional lips of a priest. Moreover, the life of a Religious gives a special emphasis to his words, and the consecrated Religious life has a great effect, not only within the Church but on those outside of her. We live in a money-making and pleasure-seeking age, with vast numbers whose intellectual horizon is bounded by the world. Worldliness, and the indifference to God, rule in the market place, exchange, in business and politics, and in all professions. The Religious Life, with its simple living, spirit of poverty, and self-sacrifice, testifies with tremendous force against the world and bears an effective witness to an unseen spiritual one. It preaches more effectively than any sermon can do. Over against the world, with its honors,

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pleasures, and delights, it bears witness to the blessedness of simplicity, self-denial, the following of Christ, and the Eternal reward.

Again: what our Church needs in clergy and laity is a real deepening of the spiritual life. We become so intermingled with the world as to lose the fresh enthusiasm of the early martyrs and confessors. We are lacking in that zeal and self-sacrifice which won, in early times, England and Europe to the Faith. Many of our Clergy perform their duties in a perfunctory way, and their families naturally demand their chief interest and care for their support. To preach Christ effectually the minister must preach of the Cross from the pulpit of the cross. We would say not a word against married clergy. But their work can well be supplemented by a Religious dedicated to a celibate life, and helped on also by a lay order.

Moreover, our age has risen to the importance of specializing different departments of work, making a special study of bodily diseases and social problems by scientific investigation. We need Communities whose life enables them to study and practise the mysteries of the spiritual life. How far below most of us come from the standard of that "fulness of God" revealed in the New Testament! How comparatively little is known of the science of prayer, as developed by the great teachers and saints! Laymen say a morning or evening prayer and some clergy make meditation, but in a Religious House its members would practise the life of devotion and

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their prayers would bring a blessing upon the Church and thus especially enrich it.

These are some of the reasons for a need of Religious Orders. It is the highest life a man can live. By it a great work for God can be done, and it has the promise of a special reward.

The Rule of St. Benedict allows for Priests. It is well that in every House there should be one or possibly more brothers in Priest's Order who can say Mass for the Community. This saves them from being dependent on the charity of outside secular clergy. But by the Rule, Priests belonging to the Community have by virtue of their holy orders no preference or standing over the lay members. They are not allowed to be called "Father," but simply "Brother," like the others. So, in my judgment, if Priests want to enter the Religious Life, they had better enter some other Order, as there are two excellent ones in our country—the Society of the Holy Cross and the Society of St. John the Evangelist. There does not appear to be need of any other.

Laymen can join either of these orders, but on becoming lay brothers, they have no vote in Chapter, and they do the work of house servants. In the Benedictine House, they are full professed choir members, and can hold any office and are the governing body.

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A COMMENTARY ON THE RULE AND THE BOOK OF CUSTOMS

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FOREWORD

To the Good Monk: Tolle et Lege

Take, read, study, and practise the Rules contained in this little book. Pray over and treasure each Rule. It may be like the little book which was bitter to the taste, but sweeter than honey to the soul. It is not to be copied, save in the heart. It must not be given away or lent, but returned when called for by the Prior. God bless the inner keeping of it.

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A Commentary on the Rule

CONVERSION

My Dear Son:

IN seeking the Religious Life it is not only necessary that you come with a good moral character, and with a devotional spirit, a desire to forward Christ's service, but you must come also as a converted man. There are many halfway Christians, comparatively few who are deeply and thoroughly converted. For the Religious Life a thorough conversion is essential.

Now, what is conversion? It is the conscious turning of the soul to God. It requires repentance, a change of heart, and the active coöperation of the will by the aid of the Holy Spirit. While some may preserve, through God's grace, their baptismal innocence, most persons fall into sins of different degrees, and require to be converted. This applies to many.

Covetousness is idolatry, yet there are avaricious and money-loving people. We are to "judge not" that we be not judged, yet there are those whose whole talk and conversation is censoriousness of others. We are to "love one another," yet there are many who nourish revenge and ill-will and harsh judgment. We are to be "true and just in all our

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dealings," yet there are many who go with the multitude in practising the common dishonesties incidental to their trade. The "meek and quiet spirit" enjoined for our personal adornment is superseded by an extravagant luxury of surroundings and dress. We are to be content with the lot of life in which God has placed us, yet some of the best souls among us are ever filled with a restless and all-constraining ambition. Though we were made for the one purpose of serving and adoring the Supreme, yet how infrequent and lukewarm is the service of most of us. But without dwelling too much on this state of the unconverted, how many are there who in making a review of their lives find so many transgressions of God's Holy Law.

St. Paul, probably referring to his childhood's innocence, says that when he became conscious of the law and the conflict of his own nature, sin manifested itself, and he consciously acted against the dictates of his own conscience. So it has been with many of us. Leaving behind our childhood, when we grew older we fell into more pronounced sins. We were disobedient to parents and teachers. We gave way to faults of temper, little acts of gluttony, dishonesty and untruthfulness, evil imaginations; and our school life had its own sins; and youth was not unmarked by vanities and pride and evil temper; and as we grew up, other sins manifested themselves. Perhaps we were neglectful of God, of prayer, of our duty towards Him. There were many sins of neglect and omission, sins which sprang from selfish-

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ness and self-love, sins it may be of the flesh, or jealousy, of word, or thought, or deed, and though kept from greater sins, we were yet far from God. In different ways God comes to the soul by His prevenient grace. "Behold I stand at the door and knock," says God. He has many different ways of knocking at the door of the heart. "Sometimes," Pusey says, "it is by voices within or without." It may be by sermons, or some Scripture texts which God brings home to us, by the warning of friends, the reproofs of elders, the taunts of equals; by the example of the good, or some shock from the sins of the bad, by change of outward circumstances, by removal from old associates, by unwonted solitude, by terror of death, or sudden deaths, by accident, of others. With patient care God watches over the soul, and thus seeks to arouse it to a knowledge of its true condition. Apart from Him, it is in a lost state. The sins which it has committed are acts against God, and have separated the soul from Him Who is its true life. It had thought little of the nature of sin. It had lived much as others about it had lived. Its standard of goodness was simply observance of the social standard. Its idea of sin was simply that of great crimes. It had not realized that spiritual sins were as bad, even more deadly, than those of the flesh. As an act against God, it had little conception. But sin strikes at the very life of God Himself. It outrages all His attributes. It sets at naught His Wisdom, His Justice, His Power. It takes the gifts He has

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bestowed upon us, and turns them against Himself. When the soldiers lashed the Body of our Lord, they were using all the time the power He gave them to torture Him. So it is with all the disobedient acts of our souls and spirits. A great lesson at the Cross is that God shows thereby that all our sin is wrong done against Himself; nor must we think that God, being Almighty, does not feel. Being a moral Being, He feels in His Greatness all the more the ingratitude, the disobedience, the neglects, and the wickedness of His children. He has made us, and His paternal love is grieved by the sins of His children. He cries out, "How can I give thee up, Ephraim?"

So at last it comes to pass that the soul, touched by the sense of God's wounded Heart, is convicted of sin. It grieves not because God has brought upon it some punishment, or because it suffers some loss of health or friendship, or fortune, or reputation, but because the Good God has been grieved. It feels keenly the separation of its soul from God Who is its Father, Maker, and End. The anguish sometimes is long, terrible. The sense of failure, of wickedness, of the guilt of sin, is intolerable. The soul can scarcely bear it and live. It desires reconciliation to God. It desires to have its sins pardoned by Him. It prays that it may be delivered from the bondage of sin, of faults, of evil habits. It desires to make some reparation to the offended Heart of God. It cries out for mercy and forgiveness. It is like a shipwrecked, drowning man crying out for life and

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health; and then it is that Christ, the ALL-loving Saviour, reveals Himself to the soul. Like the prodigal, it begins to realize its sin against the Father. Like the publican, it beats upon its breast and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Like the Magdalene, it forgets self in its courageous penitence.

Now, Christ has made an Atonement for us. He is the Propitiation for our sins. He has borne the punishment due to them. He has made an act of reparation to God on our behalf. Beneath the branches of the olive trees at Gethsemane, He knelt down, and, as the World's Representative, confessed, as if the guilty one, the sins of the whole world. He wrapped round Him in vision the sins of the world, as some one might clothe himself with the filthy garments of some dead leper. He, as the Son of Man, made His act of contrition, shedding tears of repentance, as of blood. He took the bitter cup of Penance, and drank it to the dregs. He bore in the spirit of penance the punishment due for sin, and suffered death on the Cross. Its terrible pains racked for hours His tender Body, while a dereliction of God's Presence racked His soul. O great, awful, terrible act of Atonement! Any moment, He, by His Divine Power, might have dismissed the agonies He felt. But love for the salvation of men made Him endure.

All eternity will not suffice to make us grasp the depth of that agony or the power of that love. The soul convicted of sin thus sees in Christ the one way to reconciliation to God and forgiveness of its

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sins. As standing on some high mountain you have seen the sun arise, and the whole majestic machinery of the world move on in obedience to its power, and known if you were the only being on the planet that sun would have to arise in order that little you might live, so as you kneel before the Crucified One, you must realize that all the tragedy and ghastly suffering would have to be endured in order that your sinful soul might be forgiven and live.

What does not such a love demand but a response in kind? Surely the penitent soul must say, "All I have and am I give to Thee." It must be love for Love, and life for Life.

As the fall is different, so is the restoration of those whom God in His infinite mercy spares. Sorrow and aching of heart brought upon us by God are mostly the means by which God brings back His prodigal children. Stricken to the earth like Saul, sinners see what they have done. It is then they realize as never before, like the prodigal, the great grief they have caused to the Father's Heart. A sorrow springs up in their heart that they have offended Divine Love. They not only hate and loathe themselves, but are deeply contrite for the Love they have offended. Saul ever remembered his forgiven sins. Peter also, the legend runs, mourned daily his great fall. The Church teaches us this lesson in her daily confession.

It is a most hopeful sign of a real, healthful change wrought in us when we become in life other than we were before. If for ambitious, we become

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lowly; for proud, humble; for angry, meek; for impatient, patient; for self-indulgent, self-denying; for covetous, liberal; our first conversion is usually followed by a deepening penitence. The tree to grow higher must extend its roots more widely for support.

I believe it is true of all of you that you have felt within yourselves the truth of St. Paul's utterance, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," and that deep sorrow and grief for sin has gone along with the peace of His assured forgiveness. O the joy of knowing that one is forgiven, that we are reconciled to God in Christ. O the blessedness of trusting in His promise, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He Who knows us loves us. He Who knows it all accepts us. His all-sufficient merits obtain acceptance for us. He blots out our offences. He casts all our sins behind His back and makes them as if they were not. He washes us and makes us whiter than snow.

The dear Good Shepherd has received us and brought us home in His Church. O the sweet joy of a forgiven soul. It is a mutilated Miserere which omits the verse, "Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

O Divine and Heavenly Father, I grieve from the bottom of my heart that I have ever offended Thy Love. I dare not come before Thee, save in the Name of our dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Between Thy righteous judgments, I set and plead

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the merits of Thy dear Son. Behold, O Lord, our defender, and look upon the Face of Thine Anointed, and accept me for His Sake.

O Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Who loved us even in our sins, let the depth of our misery plead to the greater depth of Thy mercy. We have denied Thee, sinned against Thy grace, crucified Thee afresh, — yet Thou didst pray for Thy murderers. I come just as I am, — a broken-hearted penitent to Thy Feet, because Thou bidst me come. I trust Thy promises. I believe in Thy Word. Be, dear Jesu, a Saviour to me, O Blessed, Holy Spirit, Whom I have so often neglected and grieved, in Thy great Love convert me, and make me a miracle of Divine Grace. I trust in my Saviour's merits. I repose in His forgiving Love. Make me a new creature, and renew a right spirit within me, for Jesus' sake. AMEN.

LIFE UNDER RULE

YOU have come, my son, to seek perfection, such as is attainable in our present state, by a life in a Community formed by the discipline of a life under Rule.

A life in Community without Rule would be a collegiate, but not a Religious, Life.

As a Community life requires order and discipline, and without order there can be no religious life.

We, as Bishop and Abbot, enjoin the following rules as supplementary and expository of our funda-

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mental Rule as given by our founder the Holy St. Benedict. They may seem to the Novice matters of small moment, but their observance tests vocation and forms character. He that despiseth little things, little by little shall he fall, but he that is faithful in little things is faithful in much.

We earnestly pray you, my Sons, lay these directions of your Father to heart. The yoke that wisdom binds upon you at first may seem like chains of iron, but being worn with a loving heart, becomes as scarlet lace.

The principles which lie at the foundation of the Religious and Community life are the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They were given by our Lord and exemplified in His practice of them. He fulfilled them in their highest degree. He gave them, not as commands which all were to follow, but as counsels of perfection; not as being ends in themselves, but as means to the acquisition of it.

Let me explain to you the reason of their selection. There are three sorts of sin in our triple being, one in each portion of it. There are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Sensuality, covetousness, and pride are the roots of all our sins. The three specific remedies as given by our Lord are found in the practice of the three vows. The body is disciplined by chastity, the soul detached from covetousness and prosperity by poverty, and the spirit made humble and so receptive of God by obedience.

A life under Rule is a restrictive one. Nature is

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often restive under it, the mind often critical. But we must remember that our Rule has God for its Author, and is endorsed by the example of great saints and the experience of many centuries. We must cultivate a spirit of trust in it and loyalty to it. We do not come into the Community to use it to aid us in our self-directed spiritual life, but to throw ourselves into it, that it may remould us.

The life is a restricted one, but, by that very reason, one of power. As the soldier can only be effectually made by the discipline of a West Point, so we cannot become Christian athletes without the hardness and discipline of the Religious Life. It should test and train every portion of our nature. The real work we shall do for God depends on our being emptied of self, and not acting on our natural impulses, but being wisely aided by the Holy Spirit.

Restrained as we are from self-asserted philanthropic plans, we do as Religious a greater work for God by the witness we bear against the luxury and pleasure seeking of the world. We bear witness to the power of Christ to enable us to lead a supernatural life. We bear witness to the truth that man cannot give up anything to God, but that God can, and will, give back something greater. We bear witness to the subordination of this life to the life to come and its promised rewards. The great final battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, is on, and our country is at its strategic point. The great struggle in our Church for the reclaiming of our full Catholic heritage is now being made. Angels

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and saints are looking on with extreme interest, and it is with Religious the final victory rests.

POVERTY

POVERTY is the virtue that detaches our hearts from all earthly things. A Religious has removed into the Kingdom of Heaven, and he is interested in the world only as subordinate to it. He desires not wealth for himself nor for his Community, knowing its futility and danger to all good works. It is full of deceiving arguments, and has been the ruin of many Communities. The Religious renounces the honours and decorations of the world. They will pass with death, and he seeks only the lasting rewards Christ will give. He rejects the delights, the amusements, the excitements of worldly pleasure, for union with Christ in His hard life of poverty, labour, and the Cross. He loses interest in worldly politics, in the worldly schemes for bettering itself, being interested in the politics of the Kingdom of Heaven and in the designs of Christ its King. The world tosses about like a sick man on his couch, turning from one side to another, restless and ever seeking, and ever failing. All kingdoms and nations will soon pass away, and only the Kingdom of Christ will endure.

The Religious is thus detached in heart and will from earthly things, clings to nothing, desires nothing for his own. Having nothing, he is invulnerable, for he can be deprived of nothing. He remains unmoved

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by any sacrifice or deprivation he may be called upon to make. His heart feels no pain at the loss of any earthly things, for it has been detached from them. He has given up himself and all to be more fully attached to Christ. He has emptied his hands to stretch them forth in prayer, and God owns them. Because the soul gives itself thus to God, God gives Himself back to the soul. Because we are poor in all things the Lord is our portion. He endows us with His power, His riches, His Goodness, His Wisdom. His Love places His Will at the disposal of our emptied wills. We are clothed with the wedding garment of His Righteousness and made ready for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The general rule concerning poverty is, that each Postulant and Novice shall arrange with the Prior what is the sum, according to his ability, he will contribute to the Community, and be it little or much, it will be regarded as a confidential communication.

No Postulant or Novice shall be allowed to give any of his capital, if he have any, to the Order, and need not give up all his income if he feels he has relatives who need his aid.

On being professed, a Brother shall make his will if he has aught to dispose of, and may remember the needs of friends and relatives and any charities of which the Superior may approve.

The Community must not seek endowments, but may have one to cover the expenses of fuel, lighting, insurance, and repairs. It may also have endowments for any charities of its own, such as a school,

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House of Rest for aged clergymen, Mission Chapel, and the like. It must not lose its spirit of dependence on God for its daily bread.

If any of the brothers subsequent to his profession shall become possessed of property, it shall be at his option to give it to the Community or to relatives or friends living in the world, but he shall not retain any of it for his own personal use.

If any one be able to bestow means on the Order, he shall not think himself entitled to any special privileges on that account, but shall in all respects share alike with his brethren.

The law of poverty applies to all things, great and small. As our Lord trained His Apostles, so must we be trained to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

Our cells are what necessity requires for repose, and are unadorned, save by a Crucifix and one picture of devotion. We are to accept them as a soldier on a campaign would the shelter of his tent. We would hereby unite ourselves to our Lord in His loneliness, His homeless state, and in His nights of prayer. Our sleep is to be made an act of devotion, remembering that within us, beneath us, and around us are the Father's Everlasting Arms. Our food is for the support of life and is simple and plain. Our habit tells of our dedication. The Rule of the House forbids smoking in it, or on the premises, or when travelling or in any other place. The same Rule applies to the use of all intoxicants. The Religious retains no money for his own personal use. He is

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forbidden to have any temporal things in such a way as to have a right to use them independently of the will of the Superior. He is not to own anything. Of those things placed in his care, he is not allowed without permission to give anything away, or lend them. He must always be careful not to accumulate a number of little things, books, etc., which he regards as his own. He must be always ready to give up anything, work, or place, or article, and not feel hurt if it is withdrawn from him. He must be careful not to waste anything belonging to the Community and take no gifts from externs without his Superior's permission. He must not conceal from the Prior any need of help which sickness may require, but not expect any other aid than what a poor man might obtain.

Poverty seems hard at first. But it has its light sides. It unites us to Christ. It shields us from the world. It develops a Community spirit. We are all brothers, soldiers in arms, sharing the trials of the same campaign. It has the seal of God's blessing on it. It develops sanctity and fits us for Heaven.

CHASTITY

An eminent Religious writer has said: —

Great is the sacrifice which a Religious makes unto God when he binds himself by the vow of poverty; for he thereby renounces that wealth which men hold in such high esteem, and deprives himself of the right ever again to possess anything as his own. Yet,

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generous as is the offering which he then places upon the altar of God, it is far surpassed, in point of self-renunciation, by that other which he lays at the feet of the Divine Master when he takes upon himself the obligations of the vow of chastity. For, by poverty he gives up what is external to himself; but by chastity he vows a daily and hourly crucifixion of self, which is accounted by many to be more grievous and more meritorious than a cruel martyrdom. As these obligations regard both his body and his soul, it is necessary that we should examine into them, and see what is that which he binds himself to do when, in the face of Heaven and of earth, he solemnly vows chastity unto his God.

In the first place, this act entails certain obligations which affect his body. Not the Religious only, but every man who is washed in the regenerating waters of Baptism, is by that sacramental act constituted a temple of the living God, in which the Holy Spirit abides till sin renders it impossible for Him to dwell there any longer. In consequence of this solemn dedication to the service of God, and of this mystical adoption into the number of His children, which is a result of it, each of us is obliged to preserve himself from all that defilement which is so strictly prohibited by the Seventh and Tenth Commandments of God. From the moment of his dedication, the Religious ceases to belong to himself. He is the property of Jesus Christ, and is pledged before Heaven and earth not only to avoid all the prohibited sensual gratifications of the flesh, but also to abstain from

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such as are sanctioned by the Divine law in the married state. This renunciation, being a matter of counsel only, is left to the free choice of all, and no one is ever suffered to take upon himself so heavy a burden, unless he feels that he has a special call from God to do so. It is to this call that our Lord referred when he said: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." He, therefore, who is conscious of this internal impulse, and who hears the voice of God sweetly inviting him to make the sacrifice, should give heed to the call and generously commit himself to the guidance of God. Having done this, he must remember that the vow affects all the senses of that body which he consecrates to the divine service, and deprives him of the liberty which might be his if God did not call him to higher things. It places a guard upon the eyes, and restricts the range of their vision to such things only as will not excite any desire for sensual pleasures. Therefore the vow of chastity forbids us to look upon anything that would imperil the purity of the soul. It does this with good reason; for, through the eyes, as through windows, the devil and the world effect an entrance, and leaguing with our own sinful flesh, steal away the treasure of God's grace and the precious pearl of our chastity.

Again, the vow of chastity places a curb upon our tongue. It forbids us to say anything that is impure, and the sin which we commit by giving utterance to words of this nature must be measured,

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like all other sins of the tongue, by the intention with which we speak, by the nature of the things which we say, and by the scandal which they are calculated to give to those who may chance to hear them. St. Paul, writing to the Christians of his day, forbade them to mention even the names by which those hideous crimes against chastity are designated. "Let them not so much as be named among you."

The vow of chastity also prohibits the hearing of impure discourses, and thus plants a hedge of thorns about our ears; for it stands to reason that we may not willingly listen to that of which we may not lawfully speak. This prohibition is specially strict with respect to all matters of this kind, because of the extreme peril to which they expose the soul. For words are the symbols of ideas.

Now while the vow of chastity directly prohibits the seeing, or the hearing, or the touching, or the speaking of anything that is forbidden by the Law of God, it, at the same time, indirectly forbids everything that may lead to the violation of that law. Chief among these is the pampering of the body by excess in the use of what contributes to its well-being. Therefore, as the body in all its instincts is animal, and tends to gratify these instincts just as the brutes which perish, it will follow that in exact proportion to its vitality and energy will be the vehemence with which it will seek for whatever is flattering to the animal man. This vitality and this energy, or, as we may say, this animality, is maintained in full force and vigour by the food with which we sustain our life.

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If, therefore, that food be taken in excess, or be of such quality as to inflame the blood and augment the humours till every nerve is tingling with an over-abundance of vital force, the body, naturally enough, will overleap the barriers which both reason and the Law of God have set for it, and be guilty of excesses which even reason vehemently condemns. It is therefore absolutely necessary that those who purpose to lead a life of chastity should keep that vital energy within due bounds, and never suffer it to acquire such force as to overpower the strength of the reason. But how is this to be done, unless by withholding that aliment which feeds and maintains and augments their bodily strength? Hence, if in their own hearts they wish to hold the reins of government, they must be sparing in their meat and drink, they must not be too dainty in their fare, nor seek in it the gratification of their taste, but only the appeasing of their hunger. Their aim must not be "to live in order that they may eat, but to eat in order that they may live." If this method of proceeding will not suffice to give them a mastery over themselves, they must beat down the pride and diminish the strength of their foes by fasting, which is a most effectual means for taming the haughtiest spirit and making it obedient to the slightest dictate of the rational will. Wise, therefore, is the counsel of the old heathen poet: 'Principiis obsta,' resist the very beginnings of evil and we are safe. We may hinder a conflagration by putting our finger upon a spark, or save a huge vessel by stopping a leak, or ward off

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death by a timely remedy; so also, by the prompt ejection of an evil image, we may save our heart from the fire of impurity, our virtue from shipwreck, and our soul's life from the jaws of eternal death. It is for this reason that the Sacred Scriptures and the masters of the science of the Saints are so eager in counselling us to resist the very beginnings of evil. They exhort us to kill the enemy of our souls while he is weak and little.

As we consecrate our entire being to our Lord, our aim should be to love Him only. Consequently there must be no division of our love between Him and creatures. If we love them at all, it must be in Him and for Him. If our love of them is not of this nature, it is an earthly love, a carnal love, a love dangerous to our chastity. God is a jealous God. He will not accept a divided heart. Either He must have all or He will have nothing. When the heart is divided, He withdraws, and with Him depart His special graces and fatherly watchfulness over us. Then it is that we go from bad to worse, till at last either we fall into some grave offence against our vow, or we are mercifully roused from carelessness and made aware of our peril by some extraordinary grace of God.

OBEDIENCE

You have come, my dear Son, I do not doubt, to the Abbey truly seeking perfection. You have felt drawn to a life of devotion and Christian service.

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You have found a delight in prayer and devotional services, a desire for holiness has grown in you. But, let me ask, in desiring perfection have you desired the *means* whereby perfection is attained? Have you considered the hardness of the Religious Life? Have you considered the poverty of it, its humble fare, its coarse garments, its deprivation of home comforts, its isolation from the world, above all its Rule of Obedience? Have you not only considered these, but are willing to accept them, and as a *means* to perfection embraced and desired them? Unless you desire the means by which you can be perfected, you won't make a good Religious.

You do not come hither to become a better Christian, but to be a Religious. As pride is the principal root of all sins, so humility is the foundation of all virtues, and its foundation is laid in the sure stronghold of holy obedience.

Now, the great means is the discipline of obedience to the Rule, and to the Superior as the interpreter and administrator of it.

Obedience is the essence of the Religious Life. A Religious is one who aims at perfection in a state fixed by vows, in a Community approved by Church authority. Now while poverty and chastity may be vowed outside a Community, obedience cannot, in its full extent, be practised without one. It is therefore of the essence of Religion. It is the great law of its life. It has for its authority the approval of the Church and the teaching and example of our Blessed Lord. He was the first and greatest both

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of ascetics and Religious. He was absolutely poor, pure in body and soul, and obedient. He absolutely surrendered His Human Will to the Divine Will. The Holy Scriptures, filled with the details of His Life of suffering, were His written Rule. He was obedient also to the conditions of our humanity and never called upon His Divine Power to relieve His sufferings. He obeyed the law of infancy's silence, and as the Lamb of God was silent under the insults of His enemies. He, although Almighty God, humbled Himself to obey His fallible human guardians and was ever under the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In this life He trained the Apostles, taking them into the danger of the storm, into His life of poverty, sending them on seemingly impossible errands, to take the money from the fish's mouth, or the colt from its owner, or to claim the Upper Chamber for His Passover.

Obedience is essential to our perfection as it develops humility, and as it fits us for our life of ordered service in Heaven. It is necessary to the being and existence of a Community life. The first thing a Novice is to do is to place obedience before him as his sincere desire. He will obey the Time table, the Rules of Silence, the directions of the Prior, the Rules respecting poverty and concerning smoking, receiving gifts, visits, not leaving the Monastery without permission, and all other regulations.

It will help him if he regards his Rule as given by God and the Church, and regards his Superior as its

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living exponent. Instead of criticising, let him look beyond the man to his office and to Him Whom he represents. He may know, or think he knows, better than his Superior, but it matters less how or what things are done, than the spirit in which they are accepted.

Let us study to obey as looking to Christ and seeking to please Him. Let us obey without murmuring and criticising in heart. Let our obedience be of the joyful, truthful, and happy character. Let it be prompt like that of the Shepherds and of St. Andrew and St. Peter.

Let it be blind, trusting like the Apostles in their obedience to our Lord.

Let it be courageous, knowing our soul will open, if necessary, the prison doors or remove mountains.

Let it be entire, that the full measure of service may be rendered.

Let it be persevering, as looking beyond the trials and sufferings of the present time to the exceeding weight of the great reward.

HUMILITY

St. Benedict places humility at the foundation of the spiritual life. He places it before us in twelve degrees. One by one we should study and strive to practise them, for without the foundation of a deepening humility, we never should become good Religious. Humility is something more than a foundation. It is like unto a spiritual leaven that permeates

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all virtues. Without it the spiritual life has no sure foundation, nor without it can any virtues be brought to perfection.

Charity, because it unites us to God, is the greatest of all the virtues, — but humility, if not the greatest, is the most beautiful. It gives a fragrance to a virtue that makes it a beatitude. It is the invention and characteristic of Christianity. The proud heathen had no place for it in his catalogue of virtues. It eulogized self-esteem, self-reliance, self-assertion. It despised humility and looked down on it as a token of weakness. It regarded it as an enemy to human greatness and strength of character.

But it came from heaven. God, Who could not practise it in Glory, came to earth that He might do so. He humbled Himself at the Incarnation, humbled Himself at Calvary's Cross, and He perpetuates His humility in the Eucharist.

Docility and so humility lie at the root of all true progress. As based on truth, humility delivers man from vain-glory and self-deceit. As enabling him to bear unmoved trials, slanders, and malice of enemies, it makes him strong. As freeing him from envyings and jealousies, it makes him trusted as a loving companion. As submissive to God's dear Will, it attracts God's love and bestowal of grace.

It fits one for Heaven, where all will rejoice in the greatness of others surpassing in goodness themselves. It is a most lovable virtue, and beautiful with the radiance of the Holy Spirit. It is a missionary virtue, "We fell through pride, lifting ourselves up

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to be as a God: we must rise by humility, lowering ourselves that God may raise us up."

It may help us to consider the virtue of humility in three ways, as it is developed in the Mind, the Will, and the Heart.

Now, as to the Mind. Its first effort is for it to seriously realize our own nothingness. Only God has substantial life in Himself. We are but as vapour, or a cloud that passeth away. We exist only by the Almighty Power that sustains us. God made and preserves us. In Him we live and move and have our being. We have no right or claim to our life or our spiritual faculties. We must sink down into our nothingness when we approach God. Were we pure, innocent beings it would be necessary for us to be humble. But there is our sinfulness. What a ground for humility! The holier men are, the more ready they are to acknowledge their sinfulness. In God's sight the Heavens are not clean, and He charges His Angels with folly. How do we appear to Him? What kind of characters are we? What weakness and irritability are to be found in us. What unknown self-deceit and subtle self-love. What vain-glorying, pride, and worldliness. What self-seeking, opinionatedness, and ambition. What petty envyings, jealousies, and tempers. What murmurings, discontents, rebellions, what neglectfulnesses, what excuses and procrastinations of duty. What sort of Christians are we?

If Religious, there is our holy Rule. Try and measure yourself by it. One cry goes up from

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all, "Mea culpa, mea culpa." "Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy." Let the thought of your sinfulness keep you humble before God.

Another and yet more humiliating sight is that of our own sins. They may have been committed long ago, but the thought of them humbles us. God in His dear Love, we believe, has forgiven them. But they wound our pride, and an abiding sorrow remains.

We grieve that we have ever offended our dear Heavenly Father. We grieve that we have sinned against our Blessed Lord, and that we have grieved too the Blessed Holy Spirit. Had we to live our life over again, we think and pray that we should do better. But we cannot do this, and must not waste time by foolish regrets. We must, forgetting the things that are behind, press on and upward. The past, however, may be a ground of lowliness and humility. Then again, let us think of the lives of the Saints and what love and devotion do we find in them, what heroism in the martyrs, what steadfastness in the confessors, what prayerfulness in the hermits, what lives of laborious self-sacrifice in the vast multitude of the Religious. We have inherited their calling; how have we fulfilled it? Consider our faults, our failings, our imperfect correspondence with grace. Are we worthy to be called their companions? Let us at least now learn the lesson of a humble mind and pray the prayer of the Christian Pilgrim, "I am naught, I have naught, I am poor and sick and sin stained. I am not worthy, O Lord,

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of the lowest place in Thy Kingdom. But it is my desire to become what Thou wouldst have me become and do Thy Will."

Nor is it from the Saints only we may learn humility. We are bidden to esteem others better than ourselves. This is not to be untrue. For the humble know the greatness of God's Grace toward them. In themselves they are, so far as is good, God's work. In themselves they are God's good and their own evil. In others, they look not to the evil when it is not a duty to see it, but they look to whatever good there is in others. We know how we have failed to coöperate with it. This should keep us humble in mind. We cannot know but that our brother has, with all his faults, better coöperated with the grace given him than ourselves. One said, "If Christ had loaded any wicked man with the same mercy which He has shown to me, I suppose that he would have been much more grateful than I." Well may we therefore account ourselves least of all and set ourselves in the lowest place. We must correct the overestimate of ourselves, flattered by the flatteries of home and social life, and be more modest in the expression of our feelings, less critical of others, more content with obscurity. Let the heathen motto be ours, "Know thyself." Pray God to show thee thyself. Bear, in God's light, to see thyself, what thou hast made thyself, what thou hast been, what thou art. By God's grace the sight will never again let thee be proud.

Never seek praise, neither speak of any good that

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is in thee, nor disparage thyself if it leads others to think thee humble. Be afraid of the praise of others. If it comes, offer it in heart to God. Do not excuse thyself when blamed, unless God's service demands it. Distrust thyself. Rely not on thy resolutions. Distrust self, fear self. In all things, small as well as great, trust God.

But humility does not only rest in the mind. It is not a mere conviction of our state which reason shows to be true. It is not a mere feeling or pious sentiment. It is, or becomes, a governing principle of our life. It affects our interior thoughts and governs our external conduct. It is not aided, but the reverse, by talking about ourselves in the way of disparagement. It evaporates under any such self-advertisement. It seeks shelter from notice by hiddenness. It is a principle that grows by practice and acceptance of humiliations, and when at length it becomes a habit, it is recognized as a virtue.

Now the opposite to it is the voice of pride. Pride is the most deadly of all spiritual sins. It has multitudinous forms and degrees. It lies in the spiritual nature of man. It is the assertion and independence of self. It ends in disobedience and rebellion against God. Its result is to degrade man's nature and make him God's enemy. Over and against this terrible self-destroying vice of pride is the virtue of humility. The vice and the virtue contend for the mastery of man's will. Hence it follows that in the will informed by grace lies the perfected virtue.

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Our first step to practical humility lies in the surrender of the will. Our wills are given to us that we may make the best use of them in giving them back to God.

The great motive is that we are little children and have a kind, loving, Heavenly Father. He loves us. He knows what is best for us, and we can trust His Love. We have perhaps led an ordinarily good life, and our environment has been so much under our own control that we have not realized how self-governed we are. We have not fully or practically surrendered our will to God. We have prayed, "Thy Will be done." But the surrender by the lips even in prayer is not the real thing. God sends some trial, disappointment, affliction, to test the soul. Take all such trials as answer to prayer. Lean on God, surrendering the will by real submission.

We must see how God's Will is revealed to us by real submission in all the common course of life. The revelation of God's Will comes in things both great and small; in the choice of our mode of life, in the matter of work, in the choice of our companions, in the performance of our duties, in the place of our summer vacation, in the charitable work we should take up, in the time to be given to our social duties, in the amount of expenditure on our dress and amusements, in the bestowal of alms, in the support of the Church.

Submission becomes more difficult when some wrong is done to us, when we are rightly incensed or robbed of our projects, slandered in society or

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deserted by friends, misjudged or hurt in reputation. We cannot but feel indignant at the wrong, and tempted to retaliate. But the wrong done to us by the evil-minded or mistaken is not God's Will, but that it may happen to us is God's Will. It is not the Will of His good pleasure that any one should do wrong, but it is His Will, as signified by the event, that we should have to bear the trial. These particular trials may not come to us as Religious, but they do come in a great many ways. In all things, humble thyself under the hand of God. Take all things, through whomsoever they may come, from Him.

But we must advance from submission to conformity. "Not my will, but Thine be done." The humble soul advances from the degree of submission to a higher one. It not only accepts God's Will as He gives health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, renown or disgrace, success or failure, friendship or desertions, but it desires that God shall have His Will. It rejoices in the joy that He has in having it. It finds its peace in this repose in Him. It has come to have a truly broken heart. It has broken away from self. It has become broken unto His Will. It says in truth, "Let come what will come, Thy Will is welcome."

It is in the heart especially that humility finds its home. Its Jesus was humble, and the virtue exercised by love unites to Him. Like Him the soul desires no honours the world can give. It cannot be bribed or bought by its proffered kingdom. It

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lives in a higher region and looks down on this earth. It is in love with Jesus, and what He loves it loves. He did nothing to gain worldly applause, but was content to be rejected by it. He might have come surrounded with all the external signs of kingly pomp, but preferred the cave of Bethlehem and the workshop of Nazareth. He laid aside the glory which belonged to Him and took on Him the likeness of our sinful flesh. He might have been openly escorted by legions of Angels, but chose for His companions the rude and uncultured fishermen. He might have had the comforts of wealth, but chose to be as an outcast with no place wherein to lay His Head. He might have made friends with the great and wealthy, but became known as the Friend of publicans and sinners. He had His word of condemnation for the haughty hypocritical Pharisees, but gave His sympathy and loving forgiveness to the broken-hearted Magdalene. His Human Nature shrinks in agony from the Cross, but in penitence humbly He conformed His will to the Father's Will. He could have overcome the soldiers by a word, as He did in the hour of His arrest, but humbly He puts Himself at their disposal, saying, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." In all His bitter trials, amid lying witnesses and mockings, and spittings, blows and scourgings, He is as a Lamb led to the slaughter. He, Who is the Lord of Glory, dies the death of a Malefactor, stripped of His garments, on a cross between two thieves. Was ever such abasement? Such self-

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chosen humiliation? And the humble soul loves to be like her Jesus. He has bidden her learn of Him as humble and meek; in sorrow and pain, in want and weariness, in heart trials and wrongs, consolation is to be found in Him. He is the joy of the Religious, his life, his All-in-all. He leadeth him into the great hiding-place of His Love and gives humility a joy and peace.

MORTIFICATION

THE two great principles of perfection are mortification and prayer. All special rules can be reduced under these two heads.

A Religious girds himself with the sword of the Spirit to mortify body and soul. The body is to be brought under subjection. According to the Rule of St. Paul, "I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." A Religious must so have subdued the impulses of the flesh as to be freed from the dominion of sensual appetites. His life would be unreal if the appetite for food, sensuality, and sloth were not subdued. For the honour of our Lord he is engaged in a fight in which, to be a Religious, victory is essential. Our Lord trusts us through the Blessed Sacrament with His own indwelling. A Religious, like a Christian knight, stands on guard over that sacred Presence. He is to see that nothing unworthy of our Lord comes near Him.

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Concerning mortification, I would first point out a mistake often made concerning its character and purpose. There is a wrong view concerning it, based on an error concerning the nature of matter and the functions of the body. There is an old Manichaean error which regarded matter as evil in its nature. The followers of this system sought by asceticism to deliver themselves from the thraldom of the body. We see this exemplified in the Indian Fakir, who tortures the bodily frame with the idea that he can thereby loose his soul from its control.

The Christian belief is that all God has made, matter and body included, is good. It had been designed for noble purposes. The necessity of taking food is to teach us our dependence upon God. It also reveals to us the truth that God gives us His blessings, both natural life and grace, through ordained instrumentalities. The prodigality with which God bestows His gifts of nature is to fill our hearts with thankfulness and provide for material sacrifice. Sacrifice in the way of any mortification is an offering to God. While in its lower office it is an instrumentality for self-control, in its higher spiritual purpose it is a sacrifice to God. As a sacrifice or offering to Him, it is a means of union with Him. Thus the Christian practises mortification in a spirit of penitential love and union with His crucified Lord. It is utterly different thus in character from Indian asceticism. The Christian soul, studying the life of our Blessed

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Lord, as His Bride, must share His life. It is for Jesus and in Jesus and with Jesus he accepts and practises mortification.

A life of mortification is a necessity to a Religious. "I must suffer, or die," said St. Theresa. It is a pledge of Christ's acceptance of us. It purifies the soul by making its aim single. It procures increase of grace and spiritual strength. It develops internal light and calms the unruliness of our emotions. As a work of love, it establishes us in peace of soul. Mortifications accepted in love lessen the need of future purificative discipline. Born in humility by them, self-love gradually dies, and so we become fitted with safety to receive the joys of eternal life.

Following the wisdom of Fr. Baker, I would give three general directions, concerning our duties respecting mortification.

I. Let us be ready to do or forbear doing whatsoever any law, human or divine, shall require of us to do or forbear.

II. Let us suffer with patience and resignation all the crosses and contradictions to self-love, which, by God's Providence, shall be sent upon us. These crosses may regard external things, such as loss of goods, of friends, sickness, disgraces, injuries; or internal ones, such as trials, temptations, inward distresses, obscurity respecting duty, or periods of spiritual dryness.

III. If anything pleasing to nature is to be done, or anything displeasing to be omitted, — to

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do or omit such things, not merely because they are agreeable to nature, but because they are conformable to God's Will, doing all things, "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to the Glory of God."

Mortification is ordinarily divided into that which is necessary and voluntary. The first concerns things which we cannot avoid. They may be external or internal, such as illness, want, loss of friends, or temptations, desolations of spirit. Secondly, those also which come upon us in our religious state of life, through our rules, or by obedience to our Superiors. Concerning those trials which God sends, or allows, we should strive not only to submit our will to His Will, but to conform it to His Will. We must submit, and submission becomes a virtue when we submit intelligently and willingly. But we should try to rise up to a greater union with God in all times of trouble and temptation. We need to practise in view of future trials a sweet conformity to the Divine Will. We must strive ever to say, "Not my will but Thine be done." In this way the soul enters into a peace and joy which mere submission does not give. We are striving, as we said, against self-love. We want the old Adam in us to die. We desire the old nature to be crucified. We want the old man to be cast out and to become new creatures. Now mortification is the great instrumentality by which self-love is cauterized. It is well, however, to know that the most effective mortifications are those which

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God allows or sends. We cannot kill self-love by anything we can do, though in a degree we may mortify it. Only God can so take us in hand as to probe by His mortifications into the depth of our self-deceit, and pierce our self-love. We must therefore, if in earnest, pray Him to do this, and work this great change in us. But let me give you here a great caution. God indeed loves such prayers. They show souls to be in earnest, but we should not make this prayer until we have considered the consequences. Self-love cannot be cured, as some other temptations, by being removed. Self-love can only be removed by sharp surgical operation. The wounding of the spirit will always be with distress and pain. The dressing of the wound also, the pouring in of the oil and wine, will not be without suffering. If you pray for the mortification of self-love, you must be prepared for some calamity, distress, special temptation, desolation perhaps, loss of friendship, breaking of heart. God will do it, but it will involve suffering.

We will now consider the mortifications of the body, and in reference to it St. Augustine says that "sin is unregulated desire." Now I am writing for those who have by God's grace their appetites under such control that they do not fall into mortal sin. You are of those who have left all to follow Christ. You are aiming, not merely at self-discipline, but a loving union with your crucified Lord, and to be like Him is your desire.

Now our bodies, I am led to think, are like the

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garden of Eden. Are they to be regarded as such, or are they to be looked on as our greatest enemy, and so to be ill treated, macerated, and fought every way? There are spiritual writers who take this latter view. But unless we fall into the Manichaean heresy, we must hold that the body which God made is in itself good. Its natural appetites therefore are not sinful. They may have been more or less intensified by an evil heredity, but what God made is not to be regarded as our enemy. The body is, disciplined and controlled, the useful servant of the soul. It is, as St. Francis of Assisi said, "The beast on which it rides, and a merciful man should be merciful to his beast." I like to think that it is the garden of the soul, which is placed in it as Adam was in Eden. He was placed there to care for it, to dress it and keep it. It is as much a duty then to keep it as it is to subdue it. It is a noble creation, and the gift of God. We are trusted with it. The subduing and keeping it are part of our spiritual education.

Now in our day, the laws of health are far better understood than in former times. And it is a duty to know and obey these laws of God, as well as any other of His laws. Therefore in forming the Community, I consulted wise physicians as to the hours of sleep, the food, and general rules of life for the Monks. The Rule has proved itself to be a wise and health-sustaining one. And yet it has not been without its mark of self-denial. The Cross will be found everywhere in it. It is stamped on every

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part of our earthly tabernacle. Our food and sleep are regulated by a rule which protects us, not only from luxury, but self-indulgence. And in observing it we practise mortification.

FASTING

FASTING is a subject, said Fr. Benson, which we must approach with much humiliation in the present day. For indeed, when we think how holy men of old fasted, and think of our own bodily necessities, and worse, our own spiritual weakness, we must indeed acknowledge that we are scarcely worthy to be numbered in their company. We must humble ourselves, and if we cannot fast in any sense that is worthy of the name, at least we must take our food in such a way as befits penitents. We must take our food for the maintenance of our bodily life, that we may live to His glory, and not for our own self-indulgence. We must take our food in thankfulness that He does still give us a life in which we may serve Him. We must take our food according to the regularity of appointment, not according to the various impulses of natural appetite. We must take our food with that reverence of demeanour, acknowledging thereby that it is God's gift, and that we are supported by His bounty. We must take our food without criticism, eating that which is set before us. Let me say we may add some words to Fr. Benson's teaching. In taking our food, we should carefully observe the great law of health, of

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eating slowly and with diligent mastication; while we should keep in mind a true spirit of humility, let it be a humility which does not avoid cheerfulness. It is a duty to cultivate cheerfulness and thanksgiving for our food, and the natural comfort that ensues from it is not to be regarded as sinful. Our Lord Himself gave us this rule, when He bade His disciples to anoint their head and wash their face when they fasted.

"So to eat," says Fr. Baker, as not to abridge himself of a necessary quantity, for that would for a long time after do more harm to his spirit by too much enfeebling of the body. Neither is he to judge that he has offended by excess, because he finds a heaviness for some space after refection. Let every one content himself with what God by Superiors provides for them, accounting that to be the best for himself, unless he has some disorder which requires special food, in which case he should make it known to his Superior. While urging plainness of food, and discipline in eating, Fr. Baker allows, "that the infirmity of our body may sometimes require, not only healthy, but also well-tasting meats, not for the satisfying of our sensuality, but, as St. Augustine saith, 'for the upholding of our strength.' In which case, meats of good relish even as such, may be sought for, yea, ought to be, for the recreation and comforting of nature, and such corporal consolation may also have a good effect upon the spirit."

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SPIRITUAL MORTIFICATION

In like manner the Religious guards his soul. Self-love is to be mortified and put to death. He comes to be dead to the world, the world crucified to him, and to be dead to self. He is interiorly to have a soul God-controlled, to be a new creature, a changed character, a man governed by fixed and rigid principles of righteousness; in all things conformable to the Will of God, because God lives in Him. Our great battleground is to be found in interior or spiritual mortification. We must not only pray for a spirit of mortification, but practise mortification. The victory over self is a great and noble work. It can only be attained by attention to details. We must commence realizing that our whole soul and spiritual nature is to be mortified. Let us begin with the imagination. This must be mortified. It is a useful but dangerous faculty. It is given to us in order that the religious soul may better realize the great facts of the Gospel story. The Crucifixion should not be merely hung on the walls but in our hearts. We want to follow Christ as really present to us as He was to the Apostles, His miracles to be like present realities in which we have a part, His parables heard with the inner ear, and their seed dropping into our souls. We want so to drill the imagination that it makes Christ vivid and living to us.

We would therefore mortify this ofttimes unruly faculty and bring it into subjection. When tempted

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to idle castle-building and futile wishing of what we could be, or do, to put them aside. I do not object to the occasional reading of a good story, if it has a moral or religious purpose. But it is harmful to read exciting novels which bring pictures of passion, love, fighting, intrigues, and such matter before the mind. They leave an impress before the imagination which hinders the beautiful Vision of Christ. Whenever I have found in reading a story that it strongly aroused my imagination or interest in its termination I would lay it aside, determined not to finish it. Again, mortify the spirit, if you have such, of interest in the future. Do not allow speculations of what's going to happen. "He that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." The future for the Church and the future for our Community is with the Lord, and His promises are sure.

Learn also to mortify and put a curb on the memory. The past is full of blessings and also of danger. Let us ever keep in mind the wonderful way God has led us on to Himself. Let it fill our hearts with joyful thanksgiving and praise. It has been a heaven-lighted way, leading us up to God. But the past, as a spiritual writer says, "is also like a graveyard, and there are many things which it is better to leave in their graves to rot." Let us "forget the things that are behind, pressing forward to the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus." Then we have a reasoning faculty. This is different from our understanding. Its natural curiosity should be mortified, and we should be content with the truths

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revealed as necessary for salvation, and not seek to be wise above what is fitting. The reasoning faculty proceeds from premises to a probable conclusion. As the human mind is limited in its knowledge, and its premises are not universal, its conclusions are only more or less probable. The function of the reasoning faculties in respect to religious truths is to better enable us to understand what God has revealed and our spiritual nature discerned. It must therefore be kept in its own proper office, to illustrate and not to be made the basis of our faith.

We must also mortify it by a certain distrust in it, and not be obstinate in holding our opinions. After the truths of the faith, there is nothing of belief which is a matter of grave importance. We should therefore never argue with earnestness of manner or assertions of certainty about theoretical questions or practical matters. Whenever opinions differ in the Brotherhood, be ready to yield to others. When questions have been decided by a Chapter or authority, accept readily the decision, and let all disputations or internal criticisms pass out of the mind.

Next; we must carefully examine our heart and its affections. There are three principal passions which are to be mortified: love, anger, and sorrow. Love is the root of the passions. St. Augustine said, "It is only a good or an ill love that makes our actions to be good or ill." Our spiritual affections tend to propriety, or the love of possession of things, to liberty and independence of action, to

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self-esteem, self-judgment, and self-will. "The only possible remedy for this horrible deördination," says Fr. Baker, "is to have a new contrary divine principle implanted in our hearts." It is the love of friendship to God and to men or ourselves for His sake. Whenever our affections become so inordinate respecting any one as to come between ourselves and the supreme love we should have to God, those affections are to be mortified. Whenever the soul feels an emotion of resentment or anger towards others—here is practice for mortification. The hot human feeling is to be subdued. It may be some little thing or some great one which disturbs us. It may be some wrong that has been done us by word or by act. We cannot help feeling hurt, wounded, it may be, indignant. Our Lord, when insulted, must have rightly felt the indignity done to Himself. And there is an anger, the Apostles tell us, which is not sin. In some aspects, as against a wrong action, anger, Bishop Butler said, "was a reflection of the Justice of God." But as Christ was meek under insults, so a Religious is bound to imitate Him. He is to practise self-control even under personal insults, by word or deed. He may find it hard in his heart to forgive those he thinks may have wronged him. But let us consider how we have wronged Christ. No one has so wronged us as we have insulted, betrayed, deserted, wronged Him. And if that dear and Blessed Lord forgives, blots out our sins, and bears with us, we must, for His sake, forgive and bear with others. Again and

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again, let the soul say, "Yes, for His sake, I will forget and forgive." We must use all our endeavour to curb the heart, and when provocations come, to brush them aside as being of little account, not worth considering. We must regard such as opportunities for reaping much spiritual benefit. "I coin the good money of grace out of every insult." We must practise the use of the mildest words and friendliest looks to any one provoking us or disturbing us by an interruption. We must ever pray for some blessing on those who do us, consciously or unconsciously, an injury, or dispute with us. We must practise resignation and peace amidst all the internal crosses which God may send for the purifying of our souls. We must strive to welcome our heart's discipline with joy. The martyrdom of the heart is more effective than the martyrdom of the body.

Next; let us consider the mortification of the tongue. Scaramelli speaks of those who have courageously renounced the world and suppressed grave faults, yet were guilty of grave sins of the tongue. We find them, he says, sliding back into impatient and peevish words. Impatience! How often has one been betrayed into impatience in word and manner. Peevishness! How fretful, petulant we become under trifling trials. "Others," he says, "give way to idle and vain talk." What a multitude of sins, and O what harm is done by what is called innocent gossip. It is gossip about good plans that often hinders their execution. It is gossip that often ruins reputations and vocations. It

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is gossip that sows discord and breaks the charm of charity. By gossip I do not mean things said to the discredit of a person's character, but the reporting of little incidents which excite ridicule or laughter about clergymen, laymen, or sisters.

Make it a rule never to say anything about persons unless it is something to their credit, unless duty requires you to do so. Gossip also relates to the telling of Church news, which is of no consequence or profit to relate. The holy hermits lived in a day when there were no Church newspapers, and they were not over-anxious to know what was going on. Scaramelli speaks also of those who cannot "refrain from sarcasm and sharp sayings, little in conformity with Christian charity." We are bound, not only as Religious, but as Christians, to put the best construction on others' conduct and to think no evil. We are bound by Christ's injunction not to usurp God's prerogative and judge our fellows. Those smart little sayings and sharp words are like daggers, and in the end will hurt the user, for with such judgment as we judge, we shall be judged. Others cannot refrain from criticising their Superiors, the Rule, their fellow-workers, and so mar the beauty of the Community life. We should all strive to have the stern mind of a judge towards ourselves, and the tender heart and loving one of a mother towards all others. And what shall we say to the sins of boasting, of self-praise, or of faction-making or other sins too numerous to mention? O strive, especially in your intercourse

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with one another and the world, so to control your speech that Christ and the Holy Spirit may ever speak through you.

We should be extremely careful in our intercourse with externs. Our intercourse with them must be directed to religious instructions and the good of their soul. It would be most disloyal to our Community to speak critically of any of our brethren, or its policy. The Brothers should not dispute with one another concerning such matters as politics, and on religious topics never with any heat, but with docile and teachable dispositions. "When prudence or charity requires us to speak, we must be very careful," says Fr. Baker, "not to make the imperfections of others the subject of our discourse." Religious will be very careful to avoid having any special confidant outside the Community with whom they consult concerning its affairs. In our recreations, let us keep a moderate watchfulness over ourselves. Let a spirit of brightness, hopefulness, cheerfulness, and mutual charity be the characteristic of our recreation.

Your rule of silence is a blessed help in the mortification of the tongue. It binds you to silence in certain places in the Monastery and outside of it, and at different times. It is not only a blessed discipline, but a shrine where you may dwell with God. It binds you to the silence of the Babe of Bethlehem and to His mystical one in the tomb.

And now we come to another fruitful line for

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the practice of mortification. It is the control and government of our thoughts and our moods of feeling. We must not think it impossible to get such a control of the workings of our mind, but that we can keep them under discipline. We may make a distinction between those wanderings which are wilful and those thoughts which arise, irrespectively of our will, in our subconsciousness. If our superior spirit is directed to God, such wanderings are not sinful. We should pay no attention to them, and when wanderings take place, from whatever cause, it is not wise to go back and say our prayer over again. Cast a look to the Divine Master and go right on with your prayer. It will help us to keep the mind from wandering if we make an act of realization of our Lord's presence, and determine to say the prayer or the psalm to Him.

Then there is a class of thoughts which may be put under the head of idle dreaming, or castle building, and of wishing what we could do if we had this or that. What is needed for your work, pray for it. Be content with what God gives and allows one to do, even if it is only like putting a straw under the horses' feet, which drew the stones for the Temple.

Then there are aversions, which are to be checked. We cannot naturally love all alike, but by grace we can love all for Christ's sake. Thoughts of jealousy or envious feeling may arise, because others are approved and we neglected. Pray always for further blessings on those about whom you are jealous,

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and rejoice that your Spouse or King has better servants than yourself.

But the soul has not only evil thoughts which spring up like weeds, but good thoughts which are to be prized and kept. God is ever speaking to the soul interiorly, and again and again He gives to some text of Scripture a new light and force. He warms and cheers the heart by many consolations, and these gifts from Him must be regarded as our jewels.

Now about our moods. Sometimes we experience low spirits. They come from various causes, sometimes from physical ones, at other times from neglect. These we are bound to crush out. We must say the great promises of Christ, or sing some hymn, or give thanks to God, and determine to be bright and hopeful. We have only to come back to God and our low spirits will go away.

Again, the soul may experience a time of dryness, when it seems almost impossible for it to say office; but dryness or aridity is no sin. God often detracts sensible devotion in order to strengthen our will and love. It is the same when any darkness comes over the soul, and spiritual writers all declare we have to pass through one before coming to the land of Beulah. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" should be the soul's motto. Some tender-hearted souls are troubled occasionally with scruples. They are excessively minute in their self-examination and take for sins acts that are not so. Only what the will is known to assent to can be regarded as sinful.

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Again, others sometimes are oppressed with the fear of death. A Religious should look upon it as entering into the King's Palace and meeting her Lord. If Satan attack the soul with a sense of its sinfulness, it must meet such attack by remembering that we are "accepted in the Beloved."

Again, a depression may come from the recognized slowness of our spiritual progress. We must know God is never discouraged with us, so we must not be discouraged with ourselves.

Lastly, there is our will, which is to be mortified. It is prone to be governed by self-love and to be the victim of secondary motives. It acts thoughtlessly, on impulse, without seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is necessary that we should surrender our wills to God in Christ, as a Holy sacrifice. His Will should become the rule of our life. As our King, His Will must be the sceptre by which He governs us. He must rule over us and all our faculties, our actions, words, and thoughts. It is by obedience that our wills are subjected to Christ. Every act of obedience to Superiors or Rule strengthens the will, while every act of neglect tends to weaken it. It is a good practice to do what we now do, thoughtlessly or mechanically, by an act of will. The will clasped in Christ's Will grows strong in its power of command. It develops within us a like fortitude to His Who endured the Cross. It is by the practice of mortification that tranquillity of mind is established and preserved in us. Every act of mortification disposes us for a

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better and more quiet recollectedness of spirit. "It brings," says Fr. Baker, "a true peace of mind, an immutability, indifference, insensibility to all creatures and events by which the soul transcends all, living in God only." As our wills become more one with His Will, a peace and joy unspeakable enter into the soul, and we rest in Him. Hidden in Him, nothing can harm us, nothing make us afraid. We are like babes at the breast of God, falling to sleep in His embrace. As the seabirds fold their wings and sleep on the ocean's waves, so the happy mortified soul rests on the ocean of the love of God, calmly and peacefully, while the waters rise and fall beneath him.

PRAYER

ONE comes into the Religious state, not to save one's soul, for that is the work done by the Church, but to acquire a special Christian character. The basis of this is laid in a deep and real conversion. The Religious comes seeking after perfection. He has a very persistent and earnest desire after holiness. It is ever a reiterated and daily desire on his part. He is to aim at becoming a Christian athlete, a victor over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. He is to become a man of God, with a God-controlled soul. He is not to be merely a pious Christian, but he is to become a holy man governed by fixed principles of righteousness. It should be seen in his demeanour, conversation, control, sanctified silence. Holiness should be the mark upon him. This consummation

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cannot be acquired in a week, or a month, or a year, but is the result of a long and laborious practice of sanctity. The neophyte will not be discouraged because the way seems long and the work slow and he experiences so many failures in it. He must put the great end of perfection before him and cultivate the love of all it means.

Now the two great principles that lie at the development of the life are mortification and prayer. All the rules concerning it can be placed under one of these two heads.

We have spoken of mortification, and now we would speak of the great work of the Religious, which he undertakes for the Glory of God, the good of the Church, and the transformation of himself.

To become a good Religious, he must study prayer and its different kinds, and pray for the gift and grace of it, love it, and grow into union with God by its use.

We will now speak of the instruments with which we must labour, in order to acquire charity, purity of heart, and humility. The first of these instruments is prayer, which is defined to be "an act of the practical reason, by which we ask God for whatever is either useful or necessary for us; or it is an ascent, or lifting up of the mind and of the affections to Him. It is usually divided into vocal and mental prayer. It is called mental when the faculties of the soul only are used in communing with God, and vocal when the acts of the soul and its emotions find expression in words also. The difference

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between the two kinds is like the difference between thought and speech. When we pray mentally, we are simply thinking in the presence of our Almighty Father, and laying before Him the thoughts of our soul. This is a purely spiritual intellectual process, which carries with it the full force of the will and which is unaided by the faculty of speech. But when we give expression to the thoughts which are stirring within us, and to the emotions of our hearts, there is superadded to the spiritual action of the soul a something material which makes that action manifest and gives to it an earthly existence. The emotions, the wishes, and the aspirations of one soul may thus be drawn up into formulas of prayer and made useful for others. Such, for instance, are the Psalms of David and other portions of our Church's Liturgy, which we may call "crystallized prayer"; the recitation of them goes by the name "vocal prayer." Any one who makes use of them can then only be said to pray when he applies the faculties of his soul to say them in such a way that "mind and voice may be in accord." If the mind does nôt make the sentiments, the affections, and the petitions expressed by the words its own, they cease to be a prayer, and are nothing more than an empty formula.

Prayer is divided into the different kinds of vocal and mental prayer, the latter containing prayer of meditation, contemplation, prayer of acts, and prayer of quiet.

Under vocal prayer we have, in its Community

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form, the recitation of the Divine Office. These Offices are known by the names of Matins with Lauds, which is the Office said by the Community at night, and the Day Hours are known by the names of Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, Compline. The times of their recitation are settled by the Rule of the Abbey. Our Holy Father, St. Benedict, calls them "the Work of God." The Divine Office has for its groundwork the recitation of a portion of the Psalter. In Lauds, Vespers, and Compline, the evangelical canticles are to be found. Early in its development a hymn was introduced. It ends with the collect, which sums up and collects the principal thoughts or intention of the Divine Office. How early we know not, but long ago, the habit of chanting the Psalter was introduced. It may have come from the Jewish custom of so reciting the Psalms. This may be the meaning of St. Paul's injunction to speak to "yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The addition of song to vocal recitation completes our vocal offering to God. It is our Religious work to study the meaning of the Psalms, to learn how to apply them to our own special needs. In many cases they are beyond our understanding. We must remember that the Psalter was written especially for our Lord's use. It was His Office Book. As little children say their prayers after their mother's teaching, so we, in many cases, must say our Psalter in union with our Lord. We can intensify our devo-

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tion by interjecting at the colon of each or every other verse the words "Dear Lord" or "Blessed Jesus."

The Office should be said in divine fellowship with our dear Lord Jesus.

We should seek to realize increasingly the great dignity of our daily Offices, and that we do indeed come before God with the words, the mind, the power, the glory, the mystery of the love of Jesus Christ. The external care with which we say our Psalter must be the outward token of that inward reverence and love that our hearts feel.

THE INTENTION

EACH Office is to be said with its own intention. It is the intention which marks the difference between simple reading and praying. These intentions are either fixed by a Rule or changeable at the direction of the Abbot and Prior.

The Novice must study and practise the art of meditation. This is ordinarily called the first degree of mental prayer. There are two methods of meditation, the ancient and the modern one, of which instruction will be given elsewhere. Some minds are more adapted to one method than the other. The ancient consists in a series of acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitential love, and union with God. The modern method calls into operation in regular order the faculties of the soul. Memory and imagination recall and picture

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the subject of the meditation. The understanding discourses upon it. If a moral precept is involved, it applies the Scripture statements concerning it; if punishment, its rewards. The conscience applies the doctrine to its own case. It makes acts of gratitude, thanksgiving, praise, and penitence. It makes some practical resolution concerning its future conduct. It indulges in a colloquy with God, speaking with a familiarity and love of a child, or in some way according to the subject of the meditation. The various rules should be well studied and diligently practised.

Meditation is the science by which we practically grow in the knowledge of the Divine things of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who becomes practically our Example and the Mould of our new life. We are not only to look to Him Whom we seek to follow, but, remelted by penitence, to be recast into the mould of His Life. His Life is to take possession of us, transforming us into His own likeness. The virtues in Him are to be extended in us. We are not only to be a copy of Christ, but we are to reproduce His own Life in us. We are to be living publications of the Gospel.

The work meditation does is a slow work, but eventually it will make us true Religious and give us the Religious character. It requires the virtues of patience, perseverance, and courage, and the heart must be set with all its strength on Jesus. It must be warmed at the fire of His Passion. To be holy must be the increasing desire of the

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Religious, and the one great means is that of meditation.

The subjects of meditation will be given to the Community or to the individuals by the Prior or Abbot. During the beginning of this Novitiate, having learnt the Rules of meditation, the Novice will keep a Retreat of five days. The subjects will be somewhat of this kind: the end of man, the nature of sin, the necessity of conversion, the Passion of Christ, the two standards, the Return of the Prodigal. During his Novitiate he will also pass another Retreat on the Example of Christ, Christ's warnings, the Passion, Judgment. It will be the duty of all the Brothers to keep a monthly Day of Retreat, and the Community should have one once a year.

There are, we have noticed, higher degrees of prayer, like contemplation. But the soul, however, must not expect to receive the gift of contemplation until after a long period of practice in meditation. It is not necessary here, therefore, to speak of them. But an earnest soul may humbly look forward to their acquisition, ever remembering that they are God's gifts and not of man's acquirement.

In mental prayer, the soul realizes its union with God. "While we are acting on mental prayer," says a devout writer, "we are living: when we cease to act on mental prayer, we are dead." We ought, therefore, to approach our meditation with a real hope that God will reveal Himself to us, not merely that He will enable us to acquire a clearer

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view of this and that truth, which we have prepared, but that He will reveal Himself to us. Lord, show me Thy glory. This must be our one desire. Revelation is the coming forth of the Eternal God to the living soul.

May the art of prayer be devoutly practised by the Benedictines. May they all believe ever in prayer. May the Holy Spirit control all their hearts, desires, calm their fears, and brighten their lives, fill them with ardent faith, and a spirit of Divine charity.

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The Book of Customs

ON RISING

The Monks will be awakened each morning with the call "Benedicamus Domino," to which they will answer "Deo Gratias." During Eastertide the call will be "Christ is Risen," and the answer "The Lord is Risen Indeed."

They will dress as quickly as possible, being in their place in Choir before the first stroke of the bell.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

We are to count the recitation of the Divine Office as second only to the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice. Therefore it should be rendered with regularity, perfect promptness, and reverence and devotion.

All are to be present in Choir unless dispensed by the proper authority.

They are to go deliberately and quietly into the Chapel before the second bell is rung.

Those who come late are not to go into Choir, but to remain without in the Chapel.

They shall also make satisfaction before all by public penance.

If perchance any of the brethren be on a journey,

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let them recite the Offices at the accustomed time. (Chap. LI.)

St. Benedict insisted on great care being taken in the recitation of the Divine Office, that no mistakes be made in the pronunciation and wording.

The Psalms are to be recited slowly, with a distinct pause at the colon.

Care should be taken to maintain a dignified and devout attitude during the recitation of the Office.

At Matins and Lauds all may sit for the Psalms, rising for the Gloria. At the other Offices they shall stand for the Psalms.

They will always use their books during the recitation of the Office, and not trust to memory for its recitation.

CHAPTER OF FAULTS AND DUTIES

CHAPTER shall commence with the reading of the Martyrology by a junior.

After which follows the prayers as given in the DAY OFFICE.

After the blessing follows the TABULA, or list of duties and notices, and each Monk, on hearing his name, shall bow.

Then shall follow a discourse by the Superior, if he sees fit.

After this the postulants shall go out.

Then shall follow the Chapter of faults. Breaches of the Rule only shall be dealt with at Chapter, and

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not sins that do not implicate the breaking of the Holy Rule or Customs of the Monastery.

The Superior has the right to accuse, but may not be accused by any of the Brethren.

The Superior shall make his acknowledgment to the Brother next in rank.

The Superior presiding at Chapter shall assign the penances.

When one is proclaimed he shall arise and go into the middle of Choir and prostrate himself before his Brethren.

When the proclamations are over, any Monk desiring the prayers of the Community for any special objects shall go into the middle of the Choir, and after prostrating himself shall, in answer to the Superior's demand, reply, "I ask and beseech God's mercy and yours for —— " according to his special need.

The business being completed, the special prayers for the Dead shall be said, after which follows a lesson and the Response and Blessing.

In cases where the advice or opinion of the Community is asked, the youngest shall be asked first.

IN THE CELLS

THE Prior will inspect the cells weekly.

The floors must be washed every week at least, and swept every day.

The mattress should be turned daily, and the bed-linen renewed weekly.

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Permission must be obtained to move about the furniture, etc., of the cells.

Absolute silence must be kept in the cells at all times.

No visiting is allowed at any time in the cells.

When the lamps are lighted, the shades must always be drawn.

The proper time for the tidying of the cell is between Pittance and Tierce.

No doors are to be kept locked at any time.

AT WORK

The Monks, on receiving any instructions, shall simply acknowledge by bowing the head.

They should never manifest any reluctance when work is assigned to them.

They shall always wear an extra scapular when working.

They will pay attention to the directions given them, and be sure that they understand them.

When transmitting directions about work, they should be accurate in repeating them as they are given.

When work is committed to you, remember your responsibility is for getting it done, not for providing the reasons why it was not done.

When any work is finished, the Brother should report to the Prior.

Should any duty assigned conflict with the Tabula or Daily time table, it should be reported to the Prior.

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IN THE REFECTORY

THE Brothers will not make any noise with the dishes at the table.

If they are to be absent from a meal, they will inform the Prior.

They will not make any sign of the food being distasteful to them.

They will never talk about the food, either in praise or criticism.

The Holy Rule forbids eating between meals.

They will wash their hands before entering the Refectory.

Each will say the De Profundis while taking his place.

The Monks will face the Crucifix while saying Grace, also at Thanksgiving.

At the end of Grace the reader approaches the Prior's table and asks the Blessing.

Until the reader has commenced the first sentence the Monks will sit quietly at the table.

The various dishes shall be taken first to the Superior, and then to the guests, if there be any present in the Monk's Refectory.

No singularity in eating or drinking is allowed at the common table.

They shall eat with their head covered with the Hood, except it be a feast day; when conversation is allowed.

The servers shall be appointed weekly and shall eat with the reader after the common refection.

No Brother shall fast without permission.

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ON SILENCE

SILENCE shall be kept by all in all parts of the house, except in the Common Room at Recreation time and when permission is granted.

Care shall be taken to close all doors quietly.

The felt slippers provided shall be worn in the house, and not heavy walking shoes.

Speaking in a low voice does not prevent breaking silence.

Silence extends not only to all spoken words, but to all unnecessary greetings and gestures.

Care should be taken to observe silence in the cells.

Silence is to be observed always at breakfast and supper and at dinner, except when permission is granted to speak by the Prior. He will signify this by addressing one of the Brothers in conversation.

Monks shall never speak to a secular or extern without special permission.

When speaking to a secular or extern, never say more than is necessary, or to enter upon subjects or conversation not bearing upon business which is imposed.

Never speak of our earthly relations except to God in Prayer.

Never mention any of the events which happened before our conversion to the Holy Rule, except to the Superior, or to refer to our position in the world before we came to conversion.

Never speak of another Brother either in praise or criticism.

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Absolute silence shall be kept in the Chapel at all times, when not engaged in Divine service.

OF THE COMMON ROOM

CHAIRS should be returned to their places when not in use.

The Brother in charge of the room will be responsible that nothing be left lying about out of place.

The books in the common room shall not be taken from the room without permission.

OF MONK'S CORRESPONDENCE

ALL letters shall be placed in the letter rack in the hall unsealed, and shall be mailed by the Superior or his deputy. The Superior reserves the right to read all mail and eliminate anything that he deems objectionable.

Incoming mail shall be taken from the box by the Superior or his deputy, and shall be distributed at the discretion of the Superior.

Read Chapter LIV. of our Holy Rule.

OF THE HABIT

ALL the Brothers shall dress alike, the same cut, material, and colour.

The Habit shall be worn by all members of the Order at all times and in all places, excepting when withdrawn for the night and when bathing.

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Members of the Order are never to leave their cells at home or their rooms when away, without wearing at least the Tunic.

Great care is to be taken that the Habit is kept clean and neat and mended at once when ragged or frayed.

Garments may be worn if neatly patched.

The Habit, when discarded, shall not be used for any secular purpose.

We are always to remember that the Habit is a sacred expression of the character we are vowed to bear, as separating us from the world, as witnessing to our life of purity, of penance, and prayer, and of holy joy, as indicating that we are ever engaged in heavenly activities, and that we carry with us in all places the sanctuary of God's Presence, to Whom we, in a peculiar sense, belong. We therefore should take great care to have our Habit neat and clean and in good repair.

ON READING

Books read shall be such as tend to spiritual edification, or as fitting them for their Mission work.

They will read no books save those approved by the Abbot or Prior. They will study Holy Scripture and Church History, especially that of the Anglican Church.

Secular papers are not to be taken to the House.

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ON RECREATION

THE members will maintain a cheerful countenance and demeanour. The conversation shall be strictly guarded. There should be no discussion of theological questions. If one desire information about any theological matter, he is to ask the Abbot or Prior.

Great courtesy should govern the conversation. There should be no direct contradiction of one another.

Care should be taken not to repeat Church gossip.

Divine charity should govern the lips and the heart.

GENERAL RULES

ALL haste in walking is to be avoided.

Such attitudes as crossing of the legs and swinging the arms are to be carefully avoided.

If the Abbot or his representative enters any room, the Brothers should rise at once, and also on his leaving.

They will always rise when sitting in the hall or common room when the Superior or a Priest passes them.

If spoken to by the Superior, they will stand if he is standing.

Never to go beyond enclosure, or the bounds permitted by Holy Obedience.

Never to speak about Superiors to others.

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Never to go into Choir, Refectory, or the presence of the Abbot or Prior or Strangers, but with the Habit scrupulously clean.

Never to repeat anything said to us unless commanded to do so.

Never to excuse oneself in a fault, unless it be for God's glory, that the true offender should be discovered.

During times of Solemn Silence, and in places of perpetual silence, the hood must always be worn over the head.

The hands, when not engaged in work, should be kept under the Scapular.

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